Viewing 'Krotoa' through a Rahab Prism: A Postcolonial Feminist Encounter

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis employs a hermeneutic of suspicion to reread the narratives of two underdog women characters, as it analyses the narrative world of Rahab in Joshua 2 and 6 and the story of Krotoa as portrayed in the 2017 film *Krotoa* side-by-side. This study argues that decolonising and deconstructing hegemonic interpretations of the biblical texts is the only way the Bible still may possess value to the marginalised.

Insights from postcolonial feminist biblical interpretation are employed to show how these two very different narrative worlds collide with each another. To reflect on the stories of Rahab and of Krotoa, Musa Dube's Rahab's reading prism is used as a reading strategy to reread the narrative of Rahab as well as the portrayed character of Krotoa in the 2017 film *Krotoa.*

Rahab's character and portrayals are analysed by means of a postcolonial reading optic. Although most previous interpretations have portrayed Rahab as heroine as well as traitor, this study argues that Rahab was also the victim of the coloniser's pen, a literary construction of Israelite ideology.

This study further employs postcolonial feminist film theory as an additional methodological approach to critique the imperial strategies employed in the portrayal of Krotoa in the film *Krotoa* (2017). Postcolonial feminist film theory shows how the portrayal of Krotoa in the film version possesses a specific form of power which could liberate and at the same time perpetuate imperialising interpretations and ideologies.

Instead of revolutionising Krotoa in the history of South Africa by offering a life-giving portrayal of Krotoa, this study argues that the film has perpetuated elements of Afrikaner nationalism. Delineating the various portrayals of Krotoa exposed the patriarchal and imperial ideologies still present in the film especially with a practical application of Rahab's reading prism.

The central premise of this thesis is that both Rahab and Krotoa have much in common. This study, therefore, applies a hermeneutic of suspicion that prioritises alternative perspectives in the pursuit of a transformative understanding of these two women in contrast to their reputation and portrayals as traitors. This study argues that the two women have suffered under the rhetoric of God, glory, gold, and gender. The biblical narrative of Rahab and the film *Krotoa* (2017), as well as the historiographies that depict them, are a perfect example of how the imperial powers impose their control

on foreign lands and on the bodies of women, who have been sacrificed on the altar of unity and imperial control.

Moreover, this study explores the possibility that these two women were betrayed by their own people and the colonisers have done what they do best—employing the bodies of women who serve as the contact zones for colonisation.

By interrogating, deconstructing, and re-interpreting these two characters, this study prioritises life-affirming interpretations and portrayals of both women. The study demonstrates how the chosen reading optic liberates Rahab and Krotoa from the yoke of imperial and patriarchal interpretations and portrayals.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie tesis gebruik 'n benadering van hermeneutiese suspisie om die verhale van twee “underdog” vroue-karakters te herlees, deur die narratiewe wêrelde van Rahab in Josua 2 en 6 en die vertolking van Krotoa soos voorgestel in die 2017 film *Krotoa* langs mekaar te lees. Hierdie studie argumenteer dat die dekolonisering en dekonstruksie van hegemoniese interpretasies van die Bybelse tekste die enigste manier is waarop die Bybel steeds waarde kan hê vir die gemarginaliseerdes.

Die insigte van postkoloniale feministiese Bybelse interpretasie word gebruik om aan te toon hoe hierdie twee baie verskillende narratiewe wêrelde met mekaar in gesprek tree. In die proses om na te dink oor die verskillende vertellings van Rahab en die verhaal van Krotoa, word Musa Dube se Rahab-lees-prisma as leestrategie gebruik om die vertelling van Rahab en die uitbeelding van karakter 'Krotoa' in die film *Krotoa* (2017) te herlees.

Die karakter en uitbeeldings van Rahab word in die studie geanaliseer aan die hand van 'n post-koloniale leesoptiek. Rahab is onderskeidelik as heldin sowel as verraaier uitgebeeld. Volgens hierdie studie is Rahab die slagoffer van die pen van die koloniseerder, 'n literêre konstruksie van die Israelitiese ideologie.

Hierdie studie gebruik verder postkoloniale feministiese filmteorie as 'n addisionele metodologiese benadering ten einde die imperiale strategieë wat gebruik is in die uitbeelding van Krotoa in die film *Krotoa* (2017), krities te ontleed. Postkoloniale feministiese filmteorie toon aan hoe die uitbeelding van Krotoa in die filmweergawe 'n spesifieke vorm van mag besit wat terselfdertyd imperialiserende interpretasies en ideologieë kan bevry en voortbestaan.

In plaas daarvan om Krotoa op ‘n bevrydende wyse in die geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika uit te beeld, het die film elemente van Afrikanernasionalisme voortgesit. Met behulp van die toepassing van die Rahab-lees-prisma word die patriargale en imperiale ideologieë wat nog in die film aanwesig is met betrekking tot die verskillende uitbeeldings van Krotoa, blootgelê.

Die sentrale uitgangspunt vir hierdie tesis is dat hierdie twee vroue baie in gemeen het. Hierdie studie gebruik 'n hermeneutiek van suspisie om die alternatiewe perspektiewe van hierdie twee vroue te prioritiseer in die strewe na 'n nuwe verstaan van hierdie twee vrouens, afgesien van hul reputasie as verraaiers. Hierdie studie voer

aan dat beide vroue onder die retoriek van God, glorie, goud en gender gely het. Die Bybelse verhaal van Rahab en die filmweergawe van *Krotoa* (2017) is ‘n goeie voorbeeld van hoe geskiedskrywing hierdie vroue “afgeskryf” het in die geskiedenis, van hoe die koloniale magte hul beheer op vreemde lande en op die liggame van vroue uitgeoefen het en op die altaar van eenheid en imperiale beheer geoffer het.

Hierdie studie ondersoek ook die moontlikheid dat twee vroue deur hul eie mense verraai is, en dat die koloniseerder gedoen het wat hulle die beste doen deur die liggame van vroue te gebruik wat dien as kontakgebiede vir kolonisasie.

Deur na te dink oor hierdie twee karakters, te dekonstrueer, en weer te interpreteer, prioritiseer hierdie studie lewensbevestigende interpretasies en uitbeeldings van beide vroue. In hierdie studie word uiteengesit hoe die gekose leesoptiek Rahab en Krotoa bevry van die juk van imperiale en patriargale interpretasies en uitbeeldings.

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Motivation

Throughout the history of the Bible and history more generally, the lives of women have been filtered through male perspectives. There is an alarming tendency to speak for or about women by men, and this has quite an important relation to the intersection of gender, health, and theology. Often, the portrayal of a biblical character is in the powerful hands not only of writers but also of the translator. Musa W. Dube, a postcolonial thinker who has transformed postcolonial feminist thinking and discourses, contends that women's voices in history have always been dominated by patriarchy. She argues in *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (2000) that, “Patriarchal authors of biblical texts, compilers, readers, and translators of the past and present, as well as the church, have authorized the marginalisation of women in society in general" (Dube, 2000:27). Thus, biblical texts have constructed a trajectory in which women are marginalised. This gruesome activity is justified and authorised with the ‘word of God’ and because the word of God has been framed as authoritative in Christian communities, the voices of women have been muted and dominated by patriarchy. Hegemonic interpretations have been at the heart of this domination, and the portrayals and interpretations of biblical characters such as Rahab have sanctioned dominance and colonial thinking. These interpretations unavoidably filter into the lives of contemporary women.

Keeping the above-mentioned scenario in mind, this study examines how the interpretation of biblical texts filters into contemporary society and affect the lives of women. It will analyse the portrayal of Rahab in Joshua 2 and 6 together with the portrayal of Krotoa in the 2017 film *Krotoa* using a postcolonial feminist lens. The portrayal of Krotoa will further be analysed through film theory, which is a diverse and rich academic theory.

Biblical historiography and film theory has much in common. They both possess the power of storytelling; the portrayal of history on their ‘theatre’ stage aims to convince the reader of their standpoint. Clive Marsh in his contribution, “Audience Reception,”

in *The Routledge Companion to Religion and Film,* edited by John Lyden (2009), contends that,

> A religious film-viewer operates within an interpretive world which is informed by a specific narrative, set of narratives, or range of social (religious) practices. These all come into play as life is lived and the arts and popular culture are consumed (March 2009:267).

Building on this argument, one could say that the biblical texts have influenced interpretative narratives outside of the Bible. Biblical narratives have had a direct influence on popular culture. Since 'historical accounts' are recreated in film, and film being one form of popular culture, popular culture plays a big role in the reception and understanding of the historical account of Krotoa's life. Popular culture has become a conversation and interpretation partner in the analysis of Krotoa in the cinematic account. Popular culture influences how society is interpreted. It has evolved from society and developed the concept of cultural citizenship, which acknowledges the existence of those who do not have the ability to participate in political and economic spheres. It has a human component that represents society and is multidimensional, dynamic, nuanced, persuasive, and beautifully intricate. Therefore, popular culture may be regarded as comprising of those practices, which establish symbolic meaning—by using images, values, behaviours, and identity development.

These bodies of ideas which are formed by popular culture contribute immensely to how members of contemporary society read and interpret biblical texts and apply the principles in their daily lives. This point also relates to how films are understood and interpreted; films can either strengthen biblical hegemonies or deconstruct the hegemonic ideologies and cultures that are present in the biblical texts. Exum (1996:19) observes the distinction as well as the connection between the Bible and culture. We cannot deny therefore that culture influences how the Bible is read and interpreted in contemporary society or how the Bible also is read to make sense of culture and society. People's knowledge of biblical texts often derives from common interpretations of the ancient texts together with popular culture trends and not only from biblical teachings. Exum (1996:8) contends that "not only will our knowledge of the biblical texts influence the way in which we analyse films or paintings, but our reading of the biblical text is also likely to be shaped by our recollection of that film or painting etc." Thus, acknowledging the influence of popular culture on culture and the Bible is crucial when analysing the film *Krotoa* (2017).

Judith McKinlay in *Reframing Her: Biblical Women in Postcolonial Focus* builds on Elizabeth Pritchard's work by stating that, "theology is engaged in the construction of a theatre of belief" (2004: vii). The theatre performance which McKinlay talks about is orchestrated by the biblical writers who are the producers of the theatre performance, while the characters are the puppets used by the biblical writers/storytellers to convey a specific message and agenda, and the goal is to have the audience nod in approval of this theatre performance. McKinlay uses this creative illustration of a puppet show when she writes that:

> It seems to me that the biblical storytellers were taking up their characters and moving them across the surface of their scrolls in much the same way as a puppeteer does with their puppet audience, so that each of us, as readers, is being invited to nod in acceptance and leave the reading satisfied with the resolution. This is the power of drama, the power of the scroll (McKinlay, 2004: vii).

McKinlay further poses the question of whether we as readers should nod in acceptance of the biblical storytellers' construction. This creative analogy emphasises that our view of biblical characters, our interpretation, is clouded and formed by the stage portrayal of the biblical authors. The question is whether we should merely accept the biblical authors' portrayal of the biblical characters as they are presented to us. For instance, in the case of Rahab, should we just accept that she immediately submitted to a foreign religion and a foreign God? Should we accept that she betrayed her people without any second thought? Is this portrayal of Rahab or her actions as simple as her portrayal as the good native who submitted to the foreign powers? Do we nod in acceptance of this portrayal of Rahab or should we interrogate the underlined imperial and colonial powers and influences on the biblical text of Joshua 2 and 6?

As a feminist/womanist reader of the Bible, I have always been drawn to the portrayal of underdog characters like Rahab, and in the spirit of womanist scholars, I have been mulling over these portrayals, thinking that there must be more to this story. This desire to investigate portrayals of women like Rahab and Hagar was further strengthened when I was introduced to the works and writings of Musa W. Dube whose postcolonial feminist biblical interpretation of characters such as Rahab spoke to me on a very personal level. Initially, I encountered the history of Krotoa while interrogating my heritage and the apartheid government's definition of my being, as a 'coloured' woman. "Coloured" in the apartheid government's definition was used as a derogatory

term, one that says ‘coloured' people cannot fit into any box; therefore, they are non-entities. This notion was brought into focus when I encountered Krotoa from the vague historical writings and later in the 2017 film *Krotoa*. What I have read as historical accounts and the characterisation of Krotoa in the film *Krotoa* has left me with the impression that there must be more to this story than the portrayal of an underdog woman who died alone in a jail cell as an alcoholic. This, of course, was influenced by my positionality and reading optic.

Before embarking on the journey of analysing the biblical character of Rahab and the various portrayals of Krotoa’s character in the 2017 film *Krotoa*, it is important to identify my positionality. My interest in postcolonial feminist criticism and my positionality, like many other readers of the Bible, informs my reading optic when engaging with biblical texts. Dube (2017:46) asserts that a postcolonial feminist reading “is motivated by an attempt to understand how texts expound ideologies of oppression; how they have legitimized the oppression of the other; whether they can be reread for liberating interdependence.” This is the intended optic for this thesis. An attempt is made to understand how the ideologies of oppression that are present in the biblical texts have enabled the oppression of the other and ultimately to seek liberating perspectives and reading optics.

In her postcolonial conscious study, McKinlay (2004) stresses the dangers of modern readers reading into the text of colonial accounts. She identifies great ambivalence in the portrayal of Rahab. Reading the Rahab account with the awareness of the ideological strategies present in the texts, one can clearly hear the voices behind the text. Approaching this narrative as modern readers mean that we also bring our voices to the text which we should be very mindful of. These voices we bring to the text influence our interpretations as we read from our positionality.

1.2 My Positionality and Reading Optic

My reading optic is indeed influenced and shaped by my context. I am geographically situated in South Africa, a country that was colonised by the Dutch in 1652. This geographical location is the heart of this thesis, as it greatly influences the argument of this study. My reading optic has been shaped by my context and social location, and it is inspired by the postcolonial feminist works and writings of Musa Dube. Her work on postcolonial feminist interpretation has shaped much of my thought pattern

and critical analysis of biblical texts. Dube (2017:46) subscribes to the assumption that the ancient biblical writings were written in a specific context and the biblical texts are a reflection of the perspectives of the patriarchal authors of their time. These interpretations have benefitted the patriarchal ideologies of the patriarchal authors. It is a reality that later scholarly institutions have safeguarded and perpetuated the intentions of the patriarchal authors. I concur that the biblical narratives were indeed written in a patriarchal culture and for a patriarchal culture. Thus, one needs to re-evaluate that context as well as one's own perspective and reading optic when approaching biblical texts.

I identify (politically) as a black woman, which means that I do not subscribe to the apartheid government's racial definition of coloured, which had a derogatory connotation of nothingness. Rather, I choose to reclaim this derogative definition as many coloureds have done. I do identify (culturally) as a coloured woman of Khoi-San descent. Being designated culturally as coloured means that I do not conform to the apartheid definition, but I do not also deny the richness and the complexities of my heritage, as coloured people have reinvented and reclaimed the derogatory definition of their identity and turned it into a liberating heritage of community, wilfulness and resistance.

Since I was born and bred in a matriarchal community and household, my reading optic is quite complex. Having grown in my theological training, I am of the idea that biblical texts are a product of patriarchal cultures and a reflection of the views of their authors, their translators, as well as their interpreters. In addition, I do agree that scholars and institutions have also contributed to how biblical texts were interpreted and applied in cultural contexts where biblical texts are seen as the authoritative word of God. I am committed to a framework or reading optic that identifies gender oppression, which is always wrapped within other forms of oppression and domination at the intersection of race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, religion, gender expression, disability, etcetera. Within the broader scope of my positionality and consciousness of intersectionality, I have committed myself to carefully analyse the links between gender, imperial and colonial domination, and resistance of the biblical texts.

This entire reading optic is framed by my political background as a black woman and my cultural roots as a coloured woman, growing up in a context where it is normative for women to be in authority. I was born in a town called Mahikeng, situated in the

North West province of South Africa. I was brought up in the so-called coloured community in Mahikeng, called Danville. Danville is predominantly a matriarchal community where women are heads of households, but also where biblical texts that have been interpreted as oppressive have not been read or given much authority. Since Danville is a community with many single parent (female) headed households, one could say that Danville is a community with many Rahab's – women who have had their backs against the wall and had to prioritise survival and the wellbeing of their families. This truth has remained normative and important in my community. Rahab would not be considered a paradigm of faith in my faith community but a figure of survival and resistance.

While pursuing my tertiary education and postgraduate studies at the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University, I began to realise that the norm of a matriarchal community is not the norm in Stellenbosch. Stellenbosch and all its complexities burst my bubble that I am the norm. There, my positionality is not a strength but an obstacle. It is a place that constantly reminds me of the benefits of colonisation and the effects of imperial domination. Stellenbosch is known worldwide as the town with the widest economic gap between the poor and the rich. The demographic structure and architectural displays of the town are a reflection of the effects of colonisation. Moreover, the Faculty of Theology, which has been my academic home for six years, was the place where apartheid theology was formed. Many years later, Stellenbosch University, my alma mater, would approve a study by an all-white female Sports Science research group, titled, "Age and education-related effects on cognitive functioning in coloured South African women" (Nieuwoudt *et al*., 2019). In that study, the coloured woman is deemed to have low cognitive functions due to unhealthy lifestyle choices. The study was carried out without *cognitive* consideration and recognition of the effects of imperial and colonial rule on these 'coloured women.' The study carried out the analysis on only 60 women, who were deemed representative of all coloured women.

Given the abovementioned scenario, I chose to build on Judith McKinlay's postcolonial view in her book *Troubling Women and Land: Reading Biblical Texts in Aotearoa New Zealand* (2014), which challenged me anew. McKinlay (2014: xix) writes that "by reading the biblical text, we in fact also reread ourselves, and I would add, our histories and our present realities, that we might see these more clearly for what they are in the

postcolonial hope." Thus, I had to reread myself, restructuring my positionality, and acknowledging the intersectionality at hand when rereading myself in relation to biblical texts.

Coming to the text of Rahab, I am inclined to study the biblical text from my positionality, that is, reread the text, my present reality and myself. The goal is to read between, behind and most importantly beyond the biblical text of Joshua 2 and 6 that have been 'given' authority through interpretation and reception. The reading of these biblical narratives will be done from the position of a black, coloured woman of Khoi-san descent, and by linking Rahab to Krotoa who was a Khoi woman. In all disclosure, my positionality greatly influences my interpretation and perspectives.

Fernando Segovia contends that "there is an enduring construct of a universal informed reader, the reader who would attain to impartiality and objectivity through the adoption of scientific methods and the denial of particularity and contextuality. This has been naïve and dangerous" (Segovia, 1995:29). I also do not subscribe to this idea of a universal construct, as I do not believe that total impartiality and objectivity can be obtained by any reader. Segovia (1995:57) firmly calls for readers to embody an unapologetic reading optic that acknowledges that the reading of the biblical text is indeed influenced by context and culture. It is not produced or read in a social vacuum, and this should be considered and applied not only to the reading of the text but to the reader and interpreter of the text as well. Based on this perspective, I wish to explore the character of Rahab as she has been portrayed by various authors and audiences as well as the reception of this portrayal, contextually, together with the character of Krotoa as portrayed in the 2017 film, *Krotoa*.

By rereading or looking afresh at these female characters, I hope to determine whether there is more to the story than what had been shown to us by the biblical writers and the film director's performance in the theatre of belief. A postcolonial lens will be applied to view these two women. Drawing from the works of Dube (2006:142), I will employ a postcolonial feminist lens to investigate how different forms of national oppression affect women and men, how gender oppression interacts with other forms of oppression, characterised by race, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity and age. Moreover, postcolonial feminist interpretation offers alternative ways of reading that prioritise social justice and gender justice in national and international relations. This transforms the hegemonic normative methods of reading and probing the Bible.

The above view captures the goal and motivation of this study. As such, a postcolonial feminist interpretative approach will be appropriated in this study.

1.3 Problem Statement

Given this reality outlined above, this thesis seeks to interrogate the way in which two women from very different times and places are portrayed by their interpreters. So, it is telling that both the biblical figure of Rahab in Joshua 2 and 6, as well as Krotoa, the so-called mother of the Khoi and San nation who was brought to the screen in the 2017 film *Krotoa* are characterised as betraying their own people.

In the narratives of Joshua 2 and 6, Rahab disobeyed the instruction of the king by refusing to hand over the spies which were suspected to be hiding in her house. Rahab then chose (without hesitating) to protect and hide the spies who were foreign men. By doing this, she then betrayed her own people who were already in fear of the invasion from these foreign forces which claimed that the God of Israel gave their native land as a promise to the Israelites.

Rahab is furthermore portrayed as the submissive 'good native,' as Lori Rowlett observes (Rowlett 2000:20). She submits to the coloniser's authority; she submits to the ideology that the coloniser has superior authority over the native. She is also portrayed as a prostitute with no sense of loyalty. In the narrative of Joshua 2 and 6, Rahab is called a prostitute – she lived on the outskirts of the city, away from the people. Her being is cast as an outcast, a *zona*. A woman with no or low moral compass suggests that her body is open for business – even to foreigners. Dube (2000:78) argues that Rahab's characterisation as a prostitute "denotes her inadequacy, her wildness and her need to be tamed by those with superior morals, those who must save her."

It is important to note that the story of Rahab as the traitor of her people is told from a perspective in which the biblical writers take the reader on a theatrical journey through the portrayal of her character. The character of Rahab whom we encounter in Joshua 2 and 6 has been viewed as synonymous with that of a traitor, a trickster, the 'good native,' or the prostitute who negotiated her way out of death. Through Rahab's characterisation in Joshua 2 and 6, she has been 'othered' by the coloniser and her own people. Othered by her own people, she lived on the outskirts of the city, a place

designated for people who should not be part of the community, people who did not belong or fit into the binaries of that specific social context. The fact that Rahab was a prostitute also suggests that she did not comply with the social standards and binaries of her time. Later on, Rahab was also othered by the colonisers. She was not one of them but a tolerated ‘other' who kept her word by not delivering the spies to the local powers. Rahab and her family’s lives were spared because she submitted to the Israelite God and accepted the coloniser's authority. According to Lori Rowlett, in her classic essay “Disney’s Pocahontas and Joshua’s Rahab”:

> The story of Rahab in (Josh 2) fits a pattern of the way female characters are used in accounts of conquest, she represents the good ‘native' who acquiesces almost immediately to the conquerors as though she recognizes from the start the inherent superiority in them and their culture. She is far too eager to turn her back on her own people, her indigenous religion and even her identity (Rowlett, 2000:65).

The portrayal of Rahab can be likened to that of the historic figure Krotoa and her portrayal in the film *Krotoa* (2017). Krotoa, an African woman whose part in history was forgotten, died in a jail cell, all alone, branded as a mere alcoholic, and "othered." Nonetheless, she remains an important historical figure who has been named the mother of the Khoi and San nation. She is othered as the one who betrayed her own people (the Khoi and San nation) by believing that both colonisers and the colonised could co-exist. According to Julia C. Wells, Krotoa is the most written about African woman in South Africa’s historiographical texts (Wells, 1998a:417). However, the historiography about Krotoa is scattered and perspectives of writers about her diverge. Krotoa has been the focus of an astounding quantity of historical heterodox works, genealogical claims, and fictional reconstructions. Meg Samuelson, in her book, *Remembering the Nation, Disremembering Women?* writes that:

> If 1652 was inscribed as the origin of white rule in Afrikaner nationalist historiography, in the ‘new’ South Africa, it is the moment of the first contact from which a multicultural nation emerges. Krotoa-Eva is the most evocative emblem of this cross-cultural contact. In the word of Andre Brink, she is the first key woman of South Africa's post-colonization story (Samuelson, 2007:15).

Krotoa, like Rahab, a figure in the theatre of belief, filtered through multiple interpretations and through the lens of colonialism.

Not only has Krotoa been the focus of and protagonist in many historical writings, but her life also has been "directed" into a film. Her so-called "life story" is portrayed in a film that was released on 4th August 2017 with the title, *Krotoa*. The director of the film

Roberta Durant stated that the movie was based on and inspired by “historical facts.” The introductory information in the film summarises the film as follows:

> In 1652 Krotoa a feisty, fiercely intelligent 11-year-old girl is taken from her close-knit Khoi tribe to serve Commander Jan Van Riebeeck at the first fort established by the Dutch East India Company. There she grows up into a visionary young woman, who assimilates the Dutch language and culture so well that she rises to become an influential interpreter for Van Riebeeck. However, in her mastery lies the seeds of her own downfall when she tries to find a middle way between her Dutch masters and the Khoi tribe. In the end, she is rejected by her own people and destroyed by the Dutch (Durant, 2017).

The film *Krotoa* (2017) is a literary construction of a theatre of belief. The film portrays Krotoa in a way that does not do justice to her memory, for it colonises even her memory. She is portrayed as a little girl who is intelligent enough for the coloniser to train and whose intelligence could be improved. Her surprising intelligence, her exquisite skill and ability to speak and learn foreign languages, and her body were useful for the colonisers. Joshua and his spies probably had similar views of Rahab. She is portrayed as a woman who fits the "good native" genre, as she accepts the superiority and the culture of the coloniser. Betraying her people, she is used as an instrument of conquest by the coloniser.

The biblical portrayal of Rahab as well as the story of Krotoa in *Krotoa* (the film) shows a pattern of female characters being used in accounts of conquest –which Rowlett (1996:65) describes as the good native betraying her own people by accepting the superiority of the coloniser and their culture. The portrayal of Krotoa, like that of Rahab, is a symbol of women who betray their people – the negotiators of a "rainbow nation," South Africa. McKinlay (2014:99) argues that in “biblical literature, the presence of a female character illuminates the fault lines in the system, problematizing simple claims regarding national identity and nation deity.” Thus, Krotoa became a symbol of national identity, used in the theatre of belief in the rainbow nation.

Rahab has been presented as the poster woman for national betrayal and as an unworthy (dirty prostitute) native who accepted the authority of Yahweh. She is “othered” by her own people and by the Israelites and is the heroine who is also a trickster as many women in the Bible have been portrayed. She is introduced in Joshua 2 as a prostitute to show that not only should the land be conquered and owned, but so should the sexuality of this woman, called Rahab. There is an explicit link between the woman’s body and the land, as shown by Musa Dube in her reading strategy called

"Rahab's Reading Prism." Dube articulates what she calls "the Rahab problem" as follows:

> Rahab, a harlot whose body is open to any man's taking in Jericho, serves to remind the feminist and political readers that patriarchal oppression of varying forms and degrees is experienced by women of different cultures. It describes the discursive colonisation and the precolonial patriarchy. Yet Rahab's body is also open for taking by foreign men, whose power includes taking possession of her permanently, destroying her native compatriots, possessing her land – that is, historical imperial oppression, which includes native males (Dube, 2000:121).

Rahab's story has been written from the coloniser's perspective. Her entire identity and personhood are filtered through the colonising patriarchal lens of the biblical writers. This filtered character has been accepted by many readers. Given this reality, Musa Dube's Rahab's reading prism becomes helpful. She writes:

> Rahab's reading prism, therefore, can help liberation and feminist readers of the texts to grasp this tension of the colonizer and colonized as inherent to a world ravaged by various forms and levels of imperial and patriarchal oppression. Rahab's reading prism allows for political coalitions that go beyond one's immediate identity interest to a space that is subject to much negotiation between feminist practitioners of different classes, races, cultures, religions, nations, ethnicities, sexualities, and worlds (Dube, 2000:122).

Rahab's character was filtered through the perspectives of the biblical writers, translators, and interpreters. Her identity was constructed from a certain perspective. Rahab is the coloniser's definitive dream – a dream in which the colonised voluntarily surrender to the pre-eminence of the coloniser. My argument is that a similar view can be observed in the characterisation of Krotoa. The film *Krotoa* made its appearance on the screens in April 2017 and there have been ambiguous reception and understanding of the portrayal of the character Krotoa. Like Rahab's whose character was filtered through the perspectives of the biblical writers, translators, and interpreters, Krotoa's identity has been written from a certain perspective.

In her book *Plotted, Shot and Painted* (1996), Cheryl Exum argues that women have been set up for failure. They have been shot (by the camera and painted) as well as in the textual world (narrative plot). The effect is played out in the biblical text and its portrayals of women and to portrayals of biblical women in popular culture – in literature, art, music, and film. She further writes that:

> It is not simply a matter of the Bible influencing culture, the influence takes place in both directions. What many people think they know about the Bible often comes from

> familiar representations of biblical texts and themes in popular culture than from the study of the ancient texts itself (Exum, 1996:7-8).

Exum asks what these portrayals of women mean in practical terms. How do this flow over into culture and our ways of living? She articulates her argument as follows:

> The questions that concern me are, rather, how are these women's 'stories' altered, expanded, or invented- and to what ends? How are gender ideologies of the biblical text both re-inscribed in and challenged by its cultural appropriations? How does what we think we know about biblical women, our preconceptions and assumptions shaped by our encounters with their cultural personae, affect the way we read and view their stories? (Exum, 1996:8).

Indeed, the link could be made that the power dynamics at play when analysing Rahab is evident in the analysis of the character of Krotoa.

1.4 Research Question

The primary research question of this study is:

- In what way could a postcolonial feminist biblical interpretation as represented by Musa Dube's Rahab's reading prism help in rereading the story of Krotoa, as portrayed in the 2017 film *Krotoa*?

A secondary research question would be:

- In what way may the Rahab reading prism help to deconstruct how these two women are remembered by their respective audiences? For instance, why was Rahab viewed as a hero/ine by the Israelites, or Krotoa[1] as either a heroine of the nation or a traitor to her people?

1.5 Research Objectives

The overall goal of this thesis is to reread the narratives of these two female underdogs by analysing the narrative world of Rahab and the narrative of Krotoa concurrently. Margaret Guider shows in her book, *Daughters of Rahab: Prostitution and the Church of Liberation in Brazil* (1995), that it is important to have a reconstructive interpretation

[1] References to Krotoa throughout the study (unless stated otherwise) pertains to the cinematic literary construction of this historic figure in the (2017) film *Krotoa*.

of the intertwining of Christian vision and social praxis. This reconstructive hermeneutic is comprised of three distinct elements—hermeneutical reconstruction, retroductive warrants, and background theories (Guider, 1995:5). Therefore, through postcolonial feminist biblical interpretation and a reconstructive hermeneutic, these two very different narrative worlds would be made to encounter with one another. In the process of reflecting on the different narratives of Rahab and the narrative of Krotoa, Musa Dube's Rahab's reading prism will be employed as the relevant strategy for rereading the narrative of Rahab as well as the film Krotoa. The goal is to highlight the coherent derogative colonising perspectives that one encounters when reading the text of Joshua 2 and 6 as well as the story of Krotoa in the film *Krotoa (2017).*

The central premise of this thesis is that these two women have much in common. The goal is to seek alternative and transformative views of these two women besides their reputation as traitors. Additionally, the study will consider the possibility that these two women were betrayed by their own people and the colonisers did what they do best, that is, taking advantage of this reality. Thus, a postcolonial critical interpretation is needed. Dube states that "Postcolonial studies exemplify the link between the colonized and the colonizer." Of course, this link is not on equitable terms, as such, postcolonial studies attempt to "analyse the major mistakes of the past" while building "bridges for future dialogue" (Dube 1996b:248-249). Furthermore, Punt (2006: 65) explains that:

> [Postcolonial studies] specifically addresses the silencing of the Other through the colonial strategy of posing the colonised as the inverse of the coloniser, and so emptying the colonised world of meaning… and often vilifying the colonised Other: The savage versus the civilised, the emotional/stupid versus the rational/intelligent, the heathen versus the religiously committed. Location is an important, heuristic, political matter, and time, distance and space are categories of prime significance, and so is the autobiographical.

The link between the coloniser and the colonised is central to the analysis in postcolonial studies.

Lastly, the overall aim of this thesis is to show how these two very different narratives (narrative worlds) collide with each other. The narrative of Rahab and the narrative of the film *Krotoa* differ both in context and in time being many centuries apart, yet both remain similar in the sense that both women are seen as traitors of their own people,

and that their bodies are contact zones for colonisation. However, the complexities and power relations are not always considered in the process of analysis.

The main task, therefore, is to engage in a postcolonial feminist reading of the story of Rahab in order to reread the story of Krotoa as portrayed in the 2017 film. Thus, Rahab's Reading Prism will be employed together with a hermeneutical reconstructive approach to view Rahab and Krotoa anew through a postcolonial feminist lens. The portrayal of Krotoa has been filtered and told from a colonising perspective given that the director of the film *Krotoa* (2017) is a white woman named Roberta Durant. This point is problematic, as Durant's positionality suggests that she would portray the life of a Khoi-San woman from a coloniser's perspective or rather a position that does not recognise the complexities of the power relations and the intersectionality present in the story. Krotoa is depicted as the "good native," who, like the Pocahontas in pursuit of love, betrays her own people. The portrayal of Krotoa has depicted colonising history as something chosen by Krotoa (Eva). She chose to go back (after being raped by the Commander) and negotiate a middle way—a way forward for both parties to co-exist instead of going to war. In the end, she "understood" why the commander raped her, and this very invasion of her body was what caused her people to abandon her, for she had slept with the enemy.

By interrogating, deconstructing, and re-interpreting these two characters, this study seeks a life-affirming interpretation of both women. Reading the biblical text of Joshua 2 and 6 through Musa Dube's Rahab prism, I shall point out that there is colonising power at play in the characterisation of Rahab, which is also observable in the characterisation of Krotoa in the *Krotoa* film. Ultimately, the goal is to approach the two 'texts' based on a hermeneutic of suspicion and re-read Rahab and Krotoa (through the Rahab's prism) in order to forge an alternative portrayal of Krotoa.

1.6 Research Methodology

The methodology that will be employed in this study will be hermeneutically focused, seeking to read biblical texts and popular culture side-by-side through a postcolonial feminist lens. Often there is a tension when there is a focus on the one and not on the other or when reading the one through the lens of the other. Popular culture or contemporary society in its essence contributes immensely to how we understand and

interpret our context, positionality, and the Bible because we apply biblical values in society.

Although postcolonial feminist biblical interpretation is the primary methodology employed in this thesis, feminist film theory will be used also to analyse the character of Krotoa in the renowned film *Krotoa*. Feminist film theory criticises classical cinema for its stereotyped representation of women. It aims to represent adequately female subjectivity and female desire on the silver screen. During its heyday in the 1970s and 1980s, the poststructuralist perspective, which dominated the approach to cinema, claimed that cinema is more than just a reflection of social relations in that it actively constructs meanings of sexual difference and sexuality (Smelik, 2016:1). With these methodologies, this study aims to deconstruct the normative depictions of both Rahab and Krotoa.

1.7 Chapter Outline

Chapter One of this study will offer an introduction to the study that delineates the Background and Motivation, Research Problem, Research Question, Research Objectives as well as the Research Methodology.

Chapter Two will elaborate on the selected research methodology while situating postcolonial feminist criticism within the broader field of biblical studies. The chapter will demonstrate also how a postcolonial feminist interpretation of the story of Rahab can be related to a critical study of the portrayal of Krotoa.

Chapter Three will focus on Rahab and the biblical (historical) view of her as a traitor or heroine, also asking the question “to whom was she a traitor?” Further, the chapter will present an overview of the literature on Rahab and on the divergent perspectives of different scholars with the view of re-reading her story.

In ***Chapter Four,*** a study of the background and historicity of Krotoa will be carried out. Specifically, an in-depth analysis of the film *Krotoa* with reference to the characterisation of Krotoa will be conducted.

Chapter Five of this study will consider the reception and understanding of Krotoa by the different audiences before and after the *Krotoa* film. Attention will be paid to how she is remembered by the different audiences and how the lives of these two women Rahab and Krotoa from two different worlds and eras intersect through their portrayals.

Further, the analysis will interrogate ways in which these two divergent worlds encounter each other.

Chapter Six, which is the final chapter, will attempt to show that re-reading Rahab (through the Rahab Prism) does offer us an alternative portrayal of Krotoa. That is, a postcolonial feminist biblical interpretation offers a life-affirming and transforming perspective of Krotoa. The conclusion draws the thesis together as a whole.

CHAPTER 2

2. POSTCOLONIAL CRITICISM AND FEMINIST BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

The film *Krotoa* (2017), from an interpretative perspective, recalls certain biblical themes, specifically, of the Israelite conquest of Canaan as narrated in the book of Joshua. *Krotoa* (2017) also captures a particular interpretation of the arrival of the Dutch settlers in 1652 and the colonisation of the Good Hope Cape. Krotoa, an 11-year-old girl, finds herself at the contact zone of this settling of the Dutch officials and plays a pivotal part in the process of colonisation of the land by the Dutch settlers. This line of interpretation regarding Krotoa shows correspondence to the biblical account of conquest, colonisation, and imperialism, and, most importantly, to the story of Rahab, the native woman at the contact zone. To analyse the parallel between these two women's lives, postcolonial feminist biblical interpretation will be employed to study the character of Krotoa and the biblical character Rahab. This chapter defines postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible as the chosen methodology of this study. Special focus will be placed on the roots, principles and the *modus operandi* of postcolonial criticism, as postcolonial feminist interpretation is an offshoot of postcolonial criticism. The chapter will show that as an established, assertive and valuable methodology postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible is crucial and needed in engaging with biblical texts and that it possesses the potential to be used in analysing films, in this case, the character of Krotoa in the 2017 movie.

Postcolonial biblical criticism, and by default, postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible as a methodology is contested by various scholars. The argument is that Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation as an operational framework for reading the Bible may be perceived as ambivalent. Given this assumption, this chapter seeks to delineate postcolonial feminist biblical interpretation and show that it is a situated and deliberate methodology and reading optic.

The term postcolonial criticism describes or delineates the contemporary and ancient effects of imperialism. Imperialism, of course, has its roots in colonialism. Postcolonial criticism interrogates the relationship between the past and the present realities of colonialism and imperialism. It places emphasis on and exposes issues relating to

present neo-colonialism. In postcolonial studies, everything is disputed, challenged, and questioned. It is a field where everything is contestable. It is an entire disruption and contestation of what is recognised as normal and civilised by and through colonialist standards. Musa Dube argues that "postcolonial criticism is not about dwelling on the crimes of the past and their continuation, but also seeking transformation and liberation" (Dube, 2000:16). However, postcolonial criticism is much more than merely recognising and analysing the hegemonic influences and consequences of imperialism and colonialism. As a field of study, postcolonial criticism is committed to moving beyond seeing the evil, seeking to expose, transform and liberate those hegemonic influences and understandings of colonialism. Colonialism and imperialism did not grow out of a vacuum; they were created for a specific group of people–people who have been at the receiving end of imperialism and colonialism, those who suffered from colonial and imperial domination and power. These are called post-colonial subjects. In the study of post-colonialism, there is a prominent reference to ‘postcolonial subjects' and Dube shows that

> Postcolonial subjects describe a people whose perceptions of each other and economic, political, and cultural relationships cannot be separated from the global impact and constructions of Western /modern imperialism, which remains potent in forms of neo-colonialism, military arrogance, and globalization (Dube, 2000:16).

Thus, the influences and consequences of imperialism and colonialism are not separated from the most vulnerable. The vulnerable are the very victims of the influences and consequences of imperialism.

To understand postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible, it is important to observe its building blocks which are founded on postcolonial biblical studies. Postcolonial criticism can be defined as the general study of the effects of imperialism and colonialism through interdisciplinary fields of study. Postcolonial criticism of the Bible, therefore, analyses the reader's reception and the colonial and imperial strategies present in the biblical texts. In employing biblical criticism alongside postcolonial studies, the ground-breaking works of Musa W. Dube and R. S. Sugirtharajah will be the primary sources of reference. Both these scholars can be said to have transformed the field of postcolonial interpretation and postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible. What the two scholars also have in common is that they read the biblical texts against the grains of imperialism and patriarchy, and this informs the methodological approach to this thesis.

2.1 Postcolonial Biblical Criticism

Postcolonial biblical criticism is an approach or methodology that investigates the deepened effects of imperialism and colonialism present in biblical narratives. Postcolonial biblical criticism has developed as a method of reading and approaching textual, historical, and cultural dictions of societies where colonialism and colonial presence have infiltrated and disturbed the historical livelihood of colonial subjects. Colonial subjects refer to the colonised, who have been the subjects of imperialism and colonisation. Postcolonial criticism of the Bible is committed to the act of questioning, of challenging and changing perspectives and views of the colonised that have been imposed by the coloniser. The approach not only challenges and questions colonial strategies, but it also works towards the liberation of the so-called 'subalterns,' who are defined as people with low social and political ranking, that is, the poor and oppressed.

Postcolonial criticism has been applied in different disciplines including biblical interpretation. Thus, postcolonial criticism of the Bible challenges and questions colonial strategies not only in relation to issues of land but also in terms of self-definition, power, and gender, and how these strategies have infiltrated biblical interpretation. This is important to note because imperialism and colonialism have been entrenched in biblical writings and readings.

Dube writes in respect of the postcolonial subjects of African origin. She shows that the connection of biblical texts to Western imperialism has had several implications for reading the biblical texts in African contexts (Dube, 2000:16). Western imperialism has informed how biblical texts are understood and employed in the everyday lives of Africans. Further, Dube argues that this interconnectedness between biblical texts and Western imperialism is seen mainly in issues of land, race, and power. Sugirtharajah (2006: xii) asserts that postcolonial biblical interpretation as an approach seeks to situate colonialism at the heart of the Bible and biblical interpretation. Postcolonial biblical criticism focuses on the issues of expansion, domination, and imperialism as central forces in defining both biblical narratives and biblical interpretation. The basic premise of postcolonial biblical criticism is that it attempts to investigate biblical narratives for colonial assumptions, for imperial impulses. It analyses power relations, hegemonic intentions, the treatment of subalterns, stigmatisation of women and the

marginalised, land appropriation and the violation of minority cultures. In reading these texts, this reading optic or approach endeavours to revive and reclaim silenced voices, silenced issues, and lost causes.

2.2 Post-colonialism, Land and Christianity

Land is the primary subject in the act of imperialization and colonisation. It is a pivotal point of discussion and interrogation in postcolonial criticism because the conquest of the land is the departure point of colonisation. Postcolonial biblical criticism argues that land acquisition is the primary colonial strategy, however, what solidifies this strategy is the coloniser's need to civilise and baptise the native people. Therefore, colonisation and Christianity were in alliance.

Dube (2000:63) explains that colonial narratives define the land and its inhabitants to validate its occupation. In the book of Exodus, the God-given land is characterised positively. Within the African context, specifically, the South African, the colonisation of the land was connected directly and explicitly to the biblical text. In the trajectory of colonialism, the Bible has been the greatest weapon used in the process of imperialism. Dube affirms that "By implicating the Bible in the taking of black African lands, biblical texts are marked as powerful rhetorical instruments of imperialism" (Dube, 2000:16). The colonial history of South Africa, with particular reference to the apartheid regime, shows that the Bible was used as a potent weapon in the acts of imperialism and colonisation; specifically, the Canaan conquest was used as biblical justification for racial segregation and oppression.

Further, it is crucial to be cognisant of the fact that biblical texts were used to further and deepen domination, in particular, racial domination. Racial oppression was at the heart of the colonial approach and disputes. Imperial power and superiority of white racial groups were justified through specific interpretations of biblical texts. The colonising of the land and the dominance of the coloniser resulted in the victimisation of black people as biblical texts were used in the pursuit of power—power over the land and its rich resources. Unfortunately, the black bodies of Africans were seen also as some of the many resources on the African soil. Power and dominance of the white race over the black Africans were the imperialistic and colonising driving force.

However, postcolonial criticism of the Bible disrupts this imperialistic and colonising driving force. Dube (2000:17) argues that:

> A postcolonial reader is challenged to ask why this was affected through the Bible, why was the Bible used as justification, why biblical texts endorsed unequal power distribution along with geographical and racial differences, why in the wake of political independence, power has remained unequally distributed; and how to read for empowering the disempowered areas and races creating a better system.

Dube's point above is a direct resistance strategy against the imperial and colonising powers that have taken root in Africa. Dube interrogates the justification of using the Bible as motivation for colonialism and imperialism harshly. She interrogates the audacity of the so-called superior white race in the trajectory of colonialism—the audacity to enter the land of the black Africans, take ownership of their native lands and convince them that their religious beliefs and their ways of life are demonic and that the Christian belief is the superior belief which should be followed. With this 'audacity,' the Christian religion took shape in the lives of Africans. She writes that the Bible or rather a colonising interpretation of the Bible has motivated and sanctioned Christian believers to come into the native lands of non-Christian believers with a goal and ideology to civilise and baptise the non-Christian believers to serve and affirm their ideology of superiority and *chosenness*.

Further, Dube contends that this audacity has informed and infiltrated how African people approach and understand the Bible, capturing African readers forever. The biblical text exists in its own historical world, but it remains a participant in the formation of the present. It continues its effects beyond the ancient writings and on the intended readers and recipients of the biblical texts. The text continues to live and to inscribe its authority through its Western readers and their institutions, regardless of whether this was the intention of the author or not. Dube further argues that these aspects are pivotal to understanding the effects of imperialism and colonialism on how biblical texts are read:

> The postcolonial historical experience strongly suggests that at the heart of biblical belief is an imperialist ideology. If imperialism means 'to think about distant places, to colonize them to depopulate them' then at the core of ancient Israel's foundational story is an imperialist ideology which operates under the claims of chosenness. This means that while Israelites were repeatedly victims of imperialism, and while they resisted and awaited their freedom, their yearnings also embodied the right to geographically expand to lands that might be occupied, consequently Christianity became "unique in its imperial sponsorship" because it texts have always harboured an ideology of geographical expansion to foreign lands (Dube, 2000:17-18).

It is clear that postcolonial discourse further functions through and benefits from the criticism of the contemporary world and society. We cannot isolate biblical studies from contemporary society because the biblical texts are read and interpreted by contemporary readers. The Bible is alive in the everyday lives of contemporary readers. This, of course, comes with great complexities, one of which is the danger that biblical texts are received and interpreted extremely uncritically and literally, and as a result, perpetuating the colonial strategies and approaches. The other danger is that it may be difficult to see and understand biblical texts as relevant and relatable to contemporary society.

Dube suggests that despite the above-stated dangers, we need to be cognisant of the view that the Bible is a sacred religious book in Africa. It is no longer just a Western book; it is also a postcolonial book loaded with postcolonial agendas and challenges. She writes that "The postcolonial landscape is drawn with colours of Western Imperialism, depicting inclusive histories of unequal geographies, Unequal races, unequal distribution of power, denial of differences, and silencing of women" (Dube, 2000:20).

Sugirtharajah (2006:17) also explains that "the greatest single aim of postcolonial biblical criticism is to situate colonialism at the centre of the Bible and biblical interpretation." The impact of reformation and counterreformation over the past 400 years has flowed into historical and hermeneutical literature of biblical scholarship. Consequently, postcolonial criticism of the Bible is needed as it focuses on problems of expansion, domination, and imperialism in defining biblical stories and the interpretation of these biblical accounts (Sugirtharajah, 2006:17).

Postcolonial biblical interpretation further recognises an interconnectedness between the colonisation of the land and gender. This connection between colonialism and imperialism is quite visible in its invisibility. Dube argues that narratives of imperialism speak of white men versus ‘we' the Africans. In these narratives, there is a visibility of gender in its absence. This absence captures the actual oppressions between gender relationships and imperialism. It is a fact that women in colonised countries endure oppression from both men and women of distant countries and from the men in their native countries based on their gender. This, then, is triple oppression.

Dube explains that land or geography is integral to postcolonial reading strategies. Land is not just the slab of a physical body, but a web of intricately woven tales of power and disempowerment – its pages are not limited to the book but also written on the bodies of people. Constructions of land are indeed gendered. Land representations, therefore, are subject to much critical examination in postcolonial studies. The possession or conquest of the land is connected often – if not always –to gender, but specifically, to women's bodies. Narratives like those of Rahab, Pocahontas, daughters of Zelophehad and Pharaoh's daughter are examples of this. In these narratives, the bodies of the women remain subject to the pen of the coloniser. Written 'down' upon in history, these characters project the desires of the colonisers.

Dube (2006:119) argues that this projecting desires of the coloniser are a process, a trajectory. First at the departure point of colonisation are women at the contact zone, where women's availability for colonisation starts. Second, in the trajectory is the assumption that these women have a so-called inherent need for love. The third is the turning point or the climax of the trajectory, where the travelling 'heroes' responds to the so-called inherent need of the woman and saves the damsel in distress. Dube (2000:119) shows that whichever way the story goes, the type-scene portrays victims as woman-like lands—people who are available for the taking and who seek and beg to be possessed by the imperialists. Since most of the time type-scenes of land possession represent the desire of imperialists, these female characters are often won over. It is undoubtedly true, as several scholars have argued that gender representations are central to literary-rhetorical strategies of imperialising texts (cf. Dube, 2000:118). To validate and to veil the violence of imperialism, gender representations present victims of imperialism as those who love, need or desire to be possessed by imperial travelling 'heroes' and their nations.

It is clear that postcolonial interpretations of the Bible or postcolonial studies are indeed complex and not as simple as they seem, yet the approach is not ambivalent. It is a distinctive and established methodology or approach. One thing that is indeed transparent in the quest to understand imperialism and colonialism is the interconnectedness of imperialism, the Bible, the West, *and* gender. It is in this transparency that the serious challenges and demands of postcolonial studies are underlined. These challenges of postcolonial studies and postcolonial interpretation of the Bible are even more complex in the field of postcolonial feminist interpretation of

the Bible. The task of postcolonial interpretation of the Bible, as Dube suggests, is to read and recognise the imperialistic strategies in the biblical text, to expose and to challenge the depictions of the characters in these texts as postcolonial subjects. The goal is to read against the grain in order to expose the indoctrinating imperialising strategies that colonised subjects have been taught to read, interpret, and live by. In this way, postcolonial subjects become agents of liberation and participate in the re-reading and reclaiming of the biblical text, on their terms and not on the terms of the coloniser. However, in postcolonial criticism of the Bible, gender has not been afforded the attention it deserves. Postcolonial criticism of the Bible does not fully capture the issue of gender, and this challenge should be interrogated; hence, the need for postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible.

2.3 Postcolonial Feminist Biblical Interpretation

Postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible is an offshoot of postcolonial criticism of the Bible. It emphasises that postcolonial criticism does not fully capture the hegemony of patriarchy in the process of interrogation. As stated before, land and gender are interconnected in the process of colonialism and imperialism, yet in postcolonial criticism, this interconnectedness of land and gender or the hegemonic effects of patriarchy is not fully acknowledged and identified. Thus, a postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible, which interrogates the various approaches to reading the Bible within the framework of social justice, is needed to interrogate the interconnectedness of land and gender. The approach is deliberate, as users read with a view to liberation specifically from the yoke of the hegemonic approaches and hermeneutical methods that have oppressed and subsumed women in the Bible and the women who have to suffer under the interpretations of these oppressive texts.

Postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible is invested in the liberation and rethinking of biblical texts that are presented as normative within faith communities. These normative approaches oppress women and do not address their realities or their experiences of God. Rather, they are used to justify and validate men's domination of women, and the submission of women to men. Musa Dube has written extensively on postcolonial feminist interpretations of the Bible focusing on the imperialist strategies of the biblical text. She exposes the imperialistic strategies of the biblical authors as well as the patriarchal strategies in the biblical texts. She is

deliberate in her approach to expose the hegemonic hermeneutical strategies that have been used to interpret the biblical texts, which are not merely strategies but are visible elements in the everyday lives of women, and specifically of colonised black women. She argues that postcolonial feminist critics should be aware at all times that imperialism and patriarchy are both lethal weapons used to oppress the colonised people. She points out that critics need to take seriously both imperialism and patriarchy because the one force does not operate without the other. It is important to observe the consequences of the intersections of gender, race, class, and geographical location. She also argues that "to confront imperialism as a postcolonial feminist, one must, first recognize that patriarchal oppression overlaps with but is not identical to imperialism" (Dube, 2000:43).

Indeed, patriarchy plays an extensive role in the process of colonisation yet there is a distinction between patriarchy and imperialist strategies. However, we should guard against playing ‘oppression Olympics’ when it comes to imperialism and colonisation because that too may be a colonising and imperial strategy. Dube argues strongly that the oppression of women from Third-World countries and of women from Western countries are indeed not the same. First-World feminists do not fully recognise that imperialism and patriarchy are synonymous or identical and this is where First-World feminism and Third-World feminism diverge. The playing fields are not even. As an African womanist, Dube argues that the feminist movement does not fully capture the experiences of black women just as feminism from First-World countries does not capture the experiences and realities of women in Third-World countries. Therefore, postcolonial feminist interpretation does not only focus on patriarchy but also on the interconnectedness of the elements and the triple colonisation of women from Third-World countries.

As a discipline, postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible began to take shape formally in the 1980s when both postcolonial studies and feminist biblical interpretation began to interrogate the reality that women in colonial settings have been triply oppressed. The link between postcolonial studies and postcolonial feminist studies is the resistance to the oppression inherent in imperialism and patriarchy. Postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible speaks to systems of oppression, specifically, systems of oppression in the Bible that have been used to oppress women in the church and society for centuries. These systems or (patriarchal and imperialistic)

reading strategies have been used to scare women in the church into submission and to relegate them as lesser (secondary) beings to men. Dube argues that this is the actual rationale behind postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible (Dube, 2000:27).

Colonial and hegemonic interpretations and strategies have been challenged subtly, yet effectively, by African women. Several stories are told of women in the church who resisted the sexist writings of Paul and completely ignored or chose not to make these Pauline texts part of their lexicon. There has been subtle yet transforming resistance by women in the church from early ages. Through such resistance, women speak back to the text simply by refusing to read these derogatory texts. Postcolonial feminist biblical interpretation creates that space where the reading of the stories of women in colonial or semi-colonial situations can be remembered in order to enliven our historical and moral imagination. Dube writes that:

> Postcolonial feminist readers find their impetus within these various settings and communities of readers for liberation. It is within these spaces of those who are searching earnestly for liberation that postcolonial feminist discourse has hope for planting seeds for a better future, a better world (Dube, 2008:143).

Similarly, Sugirtharajah (2011:15) notes that postcolonial criticism emerged from recovering and celebrating the resilience of the dominated other. The focal point here is not only identifying the systems of colonial domination but also identifying the resilience and the spirit of resistance of the subjugated. Thus, many women in colonial and semi-colonial situations resisted oppressive texts simply by not reading those texts or take only what is life giving to them from the text.

In her essay ‘Reading for Decolonization (John 4.1-42)’ in *Voices from the Margins: Interpreting the Bible in the World*, Dube (2006:148) affirms that postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible prioritises the reformulation of the biblical interpretation of dominance and of biblical texts that have been written out of and for a patriarchal context and culture. However, these interpretations/conceptions have been challenged and there are calls for the reformation and reconstruction of the meanings of these texts, and for reframing and transforming the understanding of biblical authority. The African context and culture are not only considered important but are prioritised in the reformation and reconstruction of biblical authority and biblical interpretation. Whose Bible is it after all? Who determines authority? In postcolonial feminist biblical interpretation, reconstructing the understanding of biblical authority

and interpretations are done by women, by the subalterns. Interpretation possesses the power of life and death. It is a lethal weapon, making it urgent to reformulate and reconstruct hegemonic hermeneutic conceptions not within a patriarchal culture for a patriarchal culture but for those on the margins, the most vulnerable, the subalterns.

Sugirtharajah (2006:48) further notes that postcolonial feminist scholars employ and identify ideological criticism and literary-rhetorical methods from a more nuanced perspective, even though they share the same premise with postcolonial critics. These perspectives privilege the questioning of the symbolisation of women in the biblical text as well as how the placement of gender plays out in the interests of colonial domination, class, and the state of power. Postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible, for instance, focuses strongly on the symbolisation of women in the Hebrew Bible. Women are symbolised as sexual metaphors and lands to be colonised, violated, and civilised because of their sinful nature and whorish behaviour. In the Hebrew Bible, the foreign other was racialized and sexualised. The bodies of women were a focal point for the hegemonic portrayals of women. Postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible identifies and speaks against these portrayals. It focuses on women at the contact zones as the probable starting point of colonisation and imperialism.

2.4 Women at the Contact Zones

Postcolonial feminist biblical critics often highlight the experiences of women at the contact zones. Dube explains that:

> Contact zones are the meeting and the clashing of two different cultures that were geographically and historically separated, and it is an unavoidable stage of colonialism. Its method is distinguished by a desire to take control of a foreign land-culturally, economically, politically, and geographically (Dube, 2000:67).

In postcolonial feminist interpretation, these women at the contact zones are remembered not on the coloniser's terms but in a transformative way, that presents reconstructive readings and counter-narratives. The women and the construction (symbolisation) of these women are part of the counter imperialist reading strategy, as Dube calls it. The native women were often the first agents of contact, and, in most cases, the motif of tragic romance was presented, for example, in the case of Disney's Pocahontas. Dube points out that the story of Pocahontas undoubtedly belongs to the

creative pen of the coloniser. However, postcolonial feminist biblical interpretation challenges these derogatory interpretations of women and asks the questions: why are the women symbolised in this manner? Who are the beneficiaries of these portrayals of women? What ideology lies behind this biblical text? How do we transform and affirm the life of the female characters in this narrative—of the women at the contact zones?

2.5 Decolonisation Strategies in Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation

The questioning of normative biblical reading strategies is a decolonising reading strategy (Dube, 200:73). Dube stresses that at the heart of postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible lies the engagement and activity of decolonising reading strategies, that is, decolonising the biblical texts. Questioning the portrayals of biblical characters is the first step towards decolonising the biblical narratives and characters. Dube suggests that feminist readers from colonising countries should adopt a decolonising attitude. She argues that a postcolonial feminist critic will be faced with the great difficulty of having to negotiate her stance in certain spaces and, in some cases, imperial oppression would be prioritised over patriarchal oppression. This is problematic, yet it is the reality of women in colonised settings where negotiation of positionality is prevalent. In this regard, Sugirtharajah writes that:

> Postcolonial feminist critics scrutinize metropolitan interpretations, including those offered by male and feminist scholars, to see if their readings support the colonizing ideology by glossing over the imperial context and agenda or contribute to decolonizing the imperializing text for the sake of liberation (Sugirtharajah, 2006:49).

One of the postcolonial reading strategies that Musa Dube focuses on strongly is the act of remembering women in history and restoring women in the trajectory of the history and Christianity. She follows Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's feminist reconstruction strategy of placing women at the centre of history not as sub-humans but as equal participants in history and in the church. Schüssler Fiorenza places much emphasis on the reconstruction of women in the origin of Christian history. Similarly, there is a reconstruction or challenging strategy that is evident in postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible. As a feminist decolonising agent, Dube recognises and celebrates the work of Schüssler Fiorenza, yet she remains critical of the positionality of Schüssler Fiorenza's and her work, arguing that:

> Schüssler Fiorenza's reconstructive efforts are ethically motivated and committed to the empowerment of Western women. Nevertheless, her reconstructive efforts, with all their ethical commitments and rhetorical influence on biblical studies in general, have bracketed, imperial prescriptions and constructions of the biblical texts, hence, they have maintained the violence of imperial oppression against non-Western and non-Christian biblical feminists (Dube, 2000:28).

In essence, Dube asserts that Schüssler Fiorenza's reading maintains imperial strategies of subjugation. Through this act of recognising and questioning imperialist strategies, Dube has presented what a postcolonial (decolonising) feminist critical analysis of the texts should be, that in which imperial strategies are prioritised over patriarchal strategies.

Prioritising imperialism over patriarchy is a burden that comes as a given to a Third-World woman. This does not nullify the collective solidarity and work of biblical feminist and postcolonial feminist, but it is the reality of the challenges that Third-World women are faced with, challenges that First-World women may not always acknowledge. Dube argues that postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible should engage in the activity of arresting patriarchy and imperialism, which means that, at all times, a decolonising approach to the Bible should be adopted and it is much needed.

A decolonising approach to the Bible presents liberative reading strategies. Dube (2000:43) gives the core principles that a postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible employs. She argues that to confront imperialism as a postcolonial feminist, one needs to acknowledge that patriarchal oppression and imperialism overlap but they are not identical. Further, a postcolonial feminist critic should recognise methods and strategies of subjugation in cultural texts and reality and identify the patterns of resistance that imperialism evokes from the subjugated. Lastly, the approach aims to recognise the use of female gender in colonial discourse and to explicate how post-colonialism exposes some women to double and triple oppression. The goal is to cultivate postcolonial strategies of reading the Bible that resist and decolonise both patriarchy and imperial oppression and to seek to articulate the liberation of women and men of different races and nations.

Postcolonial feminist interpretations of the Bible interrogate the reality that women from Third-World countries are indeed ‘doubly colonised.’ Dube (2000:112) writes that within feminist discourse, women are theorised as colonised landless citizens. However, the postcolonial approach subverts the master's genre and language, rewrites history, rereads the master's canonical texts, retrieves the excluded texts of

women writers to subvert the patriarchal canon, and interrogates its textual representations. Thus, Dube suggests a rereading of the canon for decolonisation. She notes that colonising and imperialist strategies in Scripture are invested in displacing the cultures of the indigenous people, focusing on what separates the native people and emphasising that difference. This misleads the people into thinking that they are not one. She explains that a decolonising rereading is important in this regard, as it 'writes back' at the imperial strategies. She notes that:

> Decolonizing re-readings counteracts the oppressive dualisms and hierarchies of imperialism. The Bible no longer goes against or above the culture. Rather, a methodology of putting it within and equal to the field of diverse flowers of the world is adopted (Dube, 2000:105).

This being said, the authority of the biblical canon is challenged, and the understandings and conceptions of biblical authority are reconstructed.

2.6 Colonising and Colonised Women

Patriarchy has ensured that imperialism and colonialism remain a male-dominated system. However, women have not been inactive subjects; many have benefited from the system of domination. This points to the importance of intersectionality and the role that race, class, gender, geographic location, and culture play in the imperial system. Depending on the imperial setting, women may play a dual part in the process of imperialism and colonisation. They could be the coloniser or the colonised depending on their positionality. Dube (2000:73) indicates that "these dualisms mark identities of colonizer versus the colonized. The dualism always has a category of womanly and manly notions or lands; that is, imperialism employs gender relations to articulate ideologies of subordination." For example, the women of Exodus went from being the colonised to being participants in colonising Canaan. Of course, it is important to acknowledge the patriarchal and imperial systems that coerce women as participants in the process of colonisation, thereby, rendering them as colonisers. Dube stresses that "through classic literary motifs, women's bodies, therefore, become the prescripts and guide maps upon which the identity and desires of the colonizer, and the colonized too, are written and can be read" (Dube, 2000:73). Rahab in the Joshua narrative then highlights the multiple strategies of oppression experienced by colonising and colonised women.

To effectively analyse the biblical character of Rahab and the character of Krotoa, it is important to employ a suitable approach and methodology. Dube (2000:116) suggests that when employing postcolonial feminist biblical approach, it is most important that women at the decolonising zones, the decolonising literary practitioners, prioritise re-representations of imperial constructions of women. Considering myself at the decolonising zone, as a decolonising literary practitioner, employing these strategies of resistance and liberation through postcolonial feminist interpretation will be my *modus operandi* in this study. I will theorise broadly that women experience double and Third-World women triple colonisation (due to imperialism, their gender and their class/social or geographical location). With this reality in mind, my argument regarding Rahab and Krotoa is that both women were colonised and rendered landless citizens in their native land. Their bodies have become the prescripts and guide maps upon which the identity and the desires of the coloniser and the colonised were written. This experience has been subverted as something that they chose. They are made complicit in the situation of colonisation and landlessness that they found themselves which subverts the master's (colonisers) genre and language. Dube concurs that:

> In the end, women characters are often won over by the imperialist with romance but in the end, it is not a relationship of equals, but one that seeks for devotees more often than not, the women characters are deserted and left crying for the travelling heroes (Dube, 2000:119).

Thus, my goal is to interrogate the textual and film representation respectively of both Rahab and Krotoa in order to reconstruct a memory and perspective that liberate them from the imperial and colonising interpretations and hermeneutical lenses used to analyse women and land in biblical texts. In the process of doing this, a decolonised strategy that is rooted in postcolonial feminist biblical interpretation will be adopted. Reading for decolonisation through Rahab's reading prism as introduced by Musa Dube will be prioritised as the dominant reading lens for identifying liberation and difference without furthering imperialist agenda (Dube, 2000:121).

2.7 Rahab's Reading Prism

The character of Rahab vividly reminds the postcolonial feminist and political gender readers of the multiple and deeply rooted layers of imperial and patriarchal oppression manifesting in various forms and degrees—oppression that continues even today—

and how this has been experienced and perceived by women on the other side of the biblical texts. Rahab's reading prism recognises and names the discursive colonisation and precolonial patriarchy as well as the coloniser's assumption that Rahab's body was open for business, open to be taken by foreign men whose power includes taking possession of her permanently, destroying her native compatriots, and possessing her land. That act is a form of historical and imperial oppression which includes colonised males (Dube, 2000:121). Rahab's story is also an example of how these two forms of colonisation overlap and intertwine but are not identical in the translation of the one to the other.

Rahab's reading prism assists decolonising practitioners and readers to discern the complex acts of the coloniser and the colonised as inherent to a world atrophied by various forms and layers of imperial and patriarchal oppression. Of course, it is almost impossible that a decolonising feminist reader and writer can escape experiencing and contacting the parameters of colonising and patriarchal cultures, which have been engrained in cultural spaces as normative and dominant. Rahab's reading prism evokes a deep sense of mindfulness of the subtle forms and strategies of a patriarchal and colonising society.

Rahab's reading prism emphasises that women are active participants in refining and reconstructing the meanings and interpretations of Scripture. The 'first things first' approach is a priority of Rahab's reading prism, as it focuses on negotiating and privileging imperial oppression over and against patriarchal oppression. The negotiation of positionality and intersectionality is not applied in this reading strategy. Both are considered equally hegemonic. Interestingly, Dube writes that:

> Rahab's reading prism allows political coalitions that go beyond one's immediate identity interests to a space that is much subjected to much negotiation between feminist practitioners of different classes, races, cultures, religions nations, ethnicities sexualities, and worlds (Dube, 2000:122).

The above statement captures the argument of the 'first things first' approach.

However, Rahab's reading prism does not only focus on the colonising pen that 'wrote her down' in history. It focuses also on and prioritises the resurrection power that it possesses. Not only does this reading strategy dissect and read against the grain of the patriarchal strategies in the biblical text, but it is also mindful that its decolonising rereading is normative. Dube notes that it speaks to and against the annihilation of the

bodies of the colonised women at the contact zones. It speaks with their own voices and embodies their experiences. For Dube (2000:122), decolonising Rahab, therefore, means acknowledging and recognising the pen that constructed her intertextuality and subverting it by recalling it and exposing its oppressive strategies. She outsmarts the master's genre, language and approaches of domination and oppression by retelling history, and by reconstructing and radically decolonising hybrid narratives which refuse to privilege precolonial patriarchal oppression and the imperial claims of cultural, economic and political superiority, all on her terms as the colonised, the subaltern.

Furthermore, embodying this resurrection experience is at all times committed to recognising and naming the evils of imperial oppression and resisting the representations within biblical narratives. The Rahab's power of resurrection is invested in constructing radical hybrid discourses of decolonisation in order to ensure the cultivation of new postcolonial spaces; creating and rewriting new narratives of native relations of equity, difference, and liberation (Dube, 2000:122). Rahab's reading prism also analyses various perspectives in identifying, seeing, reading, and hearing literary texts by resisting imperial and patriarchal oppressive structures and ideologies. It concedes the impact that these structures and strategies have on the lives of many other feminists and the women in the congregation. It recognises that interpretation possesses life-giving possibilities for the reader of the biblical text, or the potential to ensure exclusion, domination, and rejection of the God-imaged biblical reader.

Most importantly, Rahab’s reading prism analyses the biblical text from various angles and enlightens women to stand in solidarity against death-provoking patriarchal interpretations of the biblical texts. It is a reading eye that demands the radical transgressions of boundaries by embracing a multi-cultural text and experiences of the colonised as normative and as truth; an interpretation that does not prioritise imperialising canons and interpretations (Dube, 2000:123). Lastly, Rahab's reading prism is not merely a theory or written approach, it flows over into praxis; a decolonised praxis that takes up spaces that were built for the exclusion of the colonised and the most vulnerable. It identifies structures that are built on profound inequality and oppressive foundations but focus on transforming those oppressive structures in order to decolonise those spaces.

This chapter has focused broadly on delineating postcolonial criticism and postcolonial feminist interpretation as a methodology, and the relevance of Rahab's reading prism as a reading strategy for analysing the biblical character of Rahab and the character Krotoa. The overall goal would be to use this methodology to demonstrate that these two women are subjects of colonial and imperial strategies and that they have been ‘written down' by the pen of the coloniser. I shall read the character of Krotoa as a victim of the colonising pen and through a postcolonial feminist biblical lens, namely Rahab's reading prism, decolonise her character in the film *Krotoa* (2017). Like Rahab, Krotoa also was at the contact zone on the shores of the Cape of Good Hope, and our interpretative lens will show a correspondence between the two women in the sense that Krotoa can be interpreted as a contemporary Rahab.

CHAPTER 3

3. POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST FILM THEORY

3.1 Introduction

The film *Krotoa* is not presented as a biblical story even though it shows particular correspondence with the biblical narrative of Joshua 2 and 6. The previous chapter has examined postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible as a methodology and an approach, and because this study also deals with a film, it is important to consider film theory as a fundamental tool for analysing *Krotoa* (2017). A specific kind of film theory that is feminist and postcolonial is pertinent in this regard. Therefore, it is important to analyse feminist film theory first to compare adequately the biblical narrative of Rahab in Joshua chapter 2 and 6 to the visual interpretation of the portrayal of the character Krotoa in the film *Krotoa* (2017), and the colonial strategies present in the film.

This chapter sets out to explore the origins of feminist film theory and the role of a postcolonial perspective in film theory. In order to analyse postcolonial feminist film theory, a brief study of film theory and feminist film theory is needed. As such, this chapter discusses film theory as a starting point for feminist film theory and later postcolonial feminist film theory. Further, a biblical film hermeneutics will be employed to portray how these various approaches and strategies help to bring to light the correspondence between Rahab and Krotoa.

3.2 Film Theory

Film theory is conceived as a systematic field of analysis that combines a variety of discrete film theories of cinema. No particular perspective rules the field of film theory, that is, there is no clear monolithic definition of film theory. Robert Stam in his book *Film Theory* (2017) argues that “Film theory should be seen as part of a long-standing tradition of theoretical reflection on the arts in general” (Stam, 2017:1).

Film theory or film studies took its form and shape academically in the 1960s and filtered into the humanities discipline. This field, like some other fields of its time,

emerged from the bid to rethink its field. Film theory has taken up a political task to rethink cinema in its current (from the 1950s) contemporary form, questioning how mainstream cinemas contribute to the dominant social structure of its time (Lapsley & Westlake, 2006:1). Film theory has directly exposed the political and social biases of its time by challenging and changing them. It, therefore, has been declared a full academic field, having evolved from being merely a field of entertainment. Rushton *et al*. (2006:7) show that theorists sought to particularise the essential properties of cinema, to mark it off as a distinctive mode of expression. These theorists worked towards a finding a distinctive academic understanding of the art of film. As such, film theory has blossomed into a fully accredited academic field of humanities.

Film theory, as suggested by Stam (2017:3), is a form of art that includes the entire realm of films such as genre, realism, and aesthetics. Stam sees film theory as a theoretical structure which presents the world with a new way of being. It rationalises a way of thinking and understanding of performative arts. Film theory offers a new universal language that did not exist before. It has filtered out to various branches of cinema and theatre, and feminist film theory forms part of this theoretical reflection.

3.3 Feminist Film Theory

As briefly discussed above, feminist film studies is part of a body of concepts of interpreting film theory. Feminist film studies developed in the 1970s out of the dialogue and progressive feminist movements of its time. This dialogue was a result of the conflicts of the time as well as the contradictions and tension between cinema and feminist movements. In the 1970s and 1980s, the second-wave feminist movement was at its peak, speaking against the raging oppression of women which ranged from sexuality to female objectification. Feminist film studies branched out of the male-dominant praxes and developed its roots through the feminist waves of the 1960s.

Feminist film theorists have in common the objectives of other feminist scholars at the forefront of the second-wave feminist movement, and scholars like Claire Johnston and Laura Mulvey turned the tables in the dialogues in film theory. They have positioned themselves as strong activists against the portrayal of women in film theory, as evident for instance in their ground-breaking writings, namely, Clair Johnston's article, "Women's cinema as counter cinema" (1973) and Laura Mulvey's "Visual

Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975). Through their active engagements and writings, they paved the way for constructive dialogue and transformation in film theory.

Feminist theorists engage and study film and cinema from the fresh theories and principles that emerged from the second-wave feminist movement. These new perspectives foregrounded the criticism of the role of women characters in certain if not all, film and cinematic narratives or genres that forwarded stereotypes as a replication of the perspective of women in society. Within this critical and liberal movements in film theory, the premise is to scrutinise patriarchal ideologies like the 'male gaze' that was prevalent in film theory.

Feminist cinematography critics and studies critically analyse movies in which patriarchal ideologies are transmitted particularly the adverse stereotypes that infantilise, demonise, and transform women into sex objects. Furthermore, feminist film studies offer a large-scale theoretical and methodological grid that affects each facet of cinematic thinking, and it criticises asterism in terms of authorship. Feminist film theory focuses on practical goals for consciousness-raising, on denunciation of negative media imagery of women as well as on the ideological hegemony underlying those imageries (Stam, 2000:172).

Alison Butler in her contributing essay, "Feminist Perspectives in Film Studies" in *The Sage Handbook of Film Studies* (2010), argues that, "These scholars had in common with other feminists that they saw gender as an ideological effect distinct from biological sex. Their anti-essentialists arguments aimed to reveal the ways in which gender ideology was mediated and produced in cinema" (Butler, 2010:392). The scholars place emphasis on the relationship between the spectator and the cinematic experience. Johnston (1973:10) also stresses the significance of creating a practice that is contrary to the prevailing cinema and its male-dominated basis. She calls this practice the counter cinema. There is an intimate relationship between the viewer and the screen in which specific gender constructions are formed. Butler (2010:393) notes that the connection between the spectator and the cinematic screen is a journey of influential sophomoric illusions about vision and power.

As a result, feminist theorists have concentrated unambiguously on the gendered conception of vision and on analysing how the objectification of women plays a vital

role in the construction of a masculinist perspective of women. This analysis has caused the critique of feminist theorists to go beyond the corrective task of examining how prevailing cinematography engendered its audience and to investigate the imagery and textual interpretative narrative depictions that positioned women as subservient beings in cinematography (Stam, 2000:172). Building on this premise, Anneke Smelik, in her article, “Feminist Film Theory” (2016:1), contends that feminist film theory is informed by a post-structuralist perspective, moving beyond reading the meaning of a film to analysing the deep structures of how this meaning is constructed. The basic premise is that sexual difference or gender is a dominant principle in the process of creating meaning in film theory. Feminist film theory claims that cinema is more than just a reflection of social relations—film actively constructs meanings of sexual difference and sexuality. Film theory possesses a form of authority because of the visual influence it holds. Thus, it contributes profoundly to social norms and constructions, specifically, the construction of women as the subservient being. The theory rejects and undermines these projections of gender and sexual difference, thereby, transforming the field of film theory.

3.4 Criticism of Feminist Film Studies

Feminist film criticism (theory) has been shaped and developed as noted in the discussion in the last paragraph. However, it is also seen as an active rejection of the patriarchal ‘male gaze’ ideology in film. Feminist film studies have not gone without criticism, as critics who have disregarded the theory claim that it is not a valuable contribution to the art trade. It has been described as ambivalent and as another form of mimicry.

In particular, black feminists in the United States, who differentiated themselves as womanists or womanist scholars such as Montrē Aza Missouri and others, have criticised and challenged the feminist movement including those in the area of film theory as well. They critically engaged with the feminist movement of their time from a particular perspective, the movement as classist. Whereas the feminist movement has not acknowledged the intersectional realities which accompany the complexities of gender, womanists have a more nuanced perspective and place emphasis on the multi-layered complexities of gender, race, and class, *etcetera*, that accompany a (black) woman’s positionality. It critiques the fact that feminism does not acknowledge

or prioritise these complexities. For instance, Missouri (2015) argues that though re-evaluation of the patriarchal male gaze focusing on gender is important, the intersectionality of race and class should also be considered in the field of feminist film studies. Since the 1990s, the scope of feminist film studies has broadened to include analyses of the depictions of gender, race, class, religion, and geographical locations as well as participatory culture, moving from textual assessment to a wider perspective on social research including the reception of films.

The incorporation of the historic framework of black feminism into feminist film theory was needed in order to fully recognise and consider how gender oppression overlaps with other forms of oppression like race, class, and sexuality. This approach or engagement is not new in film theory. For instance, bell hooks (1992:122) observes that black spectators have always been aware of the portrayal of blackness in Hollywood films. There has always been a critical engagement with how blackness is used as a framework for otherness in Hollywood films which portray whiteness as the norm. The reality of blackness as a backdrop for otherness and of whiteness as the norm has been representative of the power dynamics present in film theory.

Feminist film theory has mostly prioritised the investigation of gendered power dynamics like the male gaze. While the initial criticism of this idea has stimulated and facilitated continuing interactions and dialogues with the concerns about the implications of gender in the act of cinematographic gaze, it has failed to acknowledge other primary factors of social influences and positions. Corinn Columpar shares this concern of black feminists, arguing for a connection between feminist film studies and postcolonial theory (Columpar, 2002). She suggests that a postcolonial film theory recognise adequately the primary factors of which feminist film theory has fallen short. The postcolonial approach to film theory has led to the development of a number of theoretical concepts that prioritise racial and social disparities and consider the role of intersectionality in the process of cinematography. Building on this, Columpar (2002:26) contends that:

> Postcolonial critics have posited the existence of an ethnographic gaze and a colonial gaze - both of which have complicated the male gaze as a monolith and allowed for the emergence of a more nuanced feminist practice within film studies.

Postcolonial theory, then, is a more nuanced approach than feminist film theory; it is a transformative and inclusive approach which analyses various systems of

oppression and domination present in film theory, without prioritising one form of oppression over the other.

Film theory, according to Columpar (2002:26), has not been a reflection of the world in its authentic state of being; it is not “historically and ideologically neutral; rather it is a signifying system with its own representational legacies, established tropes, industrial constraints, and political baggage.” As such, film theory has been a social construction perpetuating social stereotypes of race, class, and gender from a specific position of privilege and dominance, which is the white male perspective.

Given this reality, Columpar (2002) strongly advocates for a postcolonial feminist critique because of its immense value to film theory given that films and cinema stand on their own distinctive merit in society and play a fundamental role in social construction. Postcolonial feminist film critique, therefore, is cognisant of the multi-layered ideological strategies concealed within film studies but is committed to challenging these concepts and ideological constructions.

3.5 A Postcolonial Feminist Film Approach

Contemporary film theory, as argued above, does not prioritise the power relations present in films in terms of gender, race, and class, among others. Feminist film theory may have recognised the phenomenon of the differences between women based on race and culture, for instance, yet, little has been done to examine the complexities and the challenges brought about by these differences, specifically, in regard to the portrayal of women in film.

Womanhood has been universalised, but the concept has not been properly explored and the importance of intersectionality has not even been placed on the dialogue table. There is no proper articulation of the asymmetrical realities, which are a result of colonial dominance. Ella Shohat critiques this position in her article “Gender and Culture of Empire: Toward a Feminist Ethnography of the Cinema” thus:

> This elision is especially striking since the beginnings of cinema coincided with the height of imperialism between the late 19th century and World War I. Western cinema not only inherited and disseminated colonial discourse, but also created a system of domination through monopolistic control of film distribution and exhibition in much of Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Shohat, 1991:45).

The art of film or film theory has indeed been complicit, acting as an ally of colonialism.

Postcolonial feminist critics like Ella Shohat and Jane Gaines have argued for a conscious acknowledgement of an ethnographic and colonial gaze in film theory. They contend that the male gaze is not the only element of dominance and subjugation in film theory but a more nuanced criticism or investigation beyond gender is needed in feminist film theory. Feminist film theory and the criticism of colonialism in it tend to reduce the importance of intersectionality in terms of the postcolonial issue, an issue which affects the lives of women differently. Given this tendency, it is important to consider a postcolonial feminist film approach when critically examining the portrayal of women in film and related areas. Columpar (2002:25) argues that there is a need for "producing criticism at sites where multiple bodies of knowledge intersect and new methodological approaches come to light." Therefore, she suggests that the postcolonial feminist film approach be normalised.

3.6 Postcolonial Criticism in Film Theory

As scholars have called for the critical analysis and examination of the colonial and ethnographic gaze present in film theory, Columpar (2002:26) suggests that the colonial ethnographic and male gazes should be acknowledged as systematic concepts and should be approached as such. They all relate to power and this analysis has its nuanced perspective when it comes to power relations in film theory.

In the process of critically examining film studies with a postcolonial consciousness, Shohat (1991:45) considers the importance of sexual variances in narratives as well as in the implied colonial structuring analogies and metaphors that accompany the colonial rhetoric. She describes this analysis as "examining the structural analogies in the colonial positioning of different regions in film, particularly in sexual terms" (Shohat, 1991:45). Shohat seeks to expose how western representations of othering territories serve the colonial discourse, noting that the colonial strategy takes its form in specific analogies that may be missed in film theory. She places emphasis on particular concepts and principles that are acknowledged in the area of postcolonial criticism in film theory. These concepts take place in the visual interpretation and portrayals present in film theory.

3.6.1 Gendered metaphors

When examining the colonial progression in film theory, the term, gendered metaphor, is a prevalent concept in the construction of the colonial subaltern. Gendered metaphors vary from that of the land being in its virgin form when the colonisers arrived. The landscape ‘bears’ rich resources or portrays the coloniser as bringing civilisation (fertilisation) to the barren land, *etcetera*. These gendered metaphors are not to be missed, as they are rather visible when employing film theory from a postcolonial feminist perspective

3.6.2 Adam-like Protagonists

A prominent colonial strategy in film theory is to show that the male protagonist is portrayed as an Adam-like character. As in many cases of the postcolonial discourse, the biblical text and narratives have been a helpful resource and basis of justification of colonisation. Film theory is not an exception to the rule. The Adam-like character is notorious for being a blameless emancipated character. Adam not only implies a semi-creator-like character but also one with a divine sovereign right to name components of the context around him. Adam got the mandate to name the animals around him, the woman followed, and he then became the superior caretaker of them all. He is totally innocent; the creation process was not Adam’s idea, but it was God who gave him the authority to act, and who can disagree with God? In this Adam-like portrayal, there is an obvious connection between patriarchal and colonial discourses. In the colonising process, the coloniser is portrayed as the Adam-like character because the Adam-like character is the superior caretaker.

3.6.3 Naming and Renaming

The Adam-like character according to the Genesis narrative not only is the caretaker of all the living creatures on earth but is also afforded the privilege to name the animals. Shohat describes naming and renaming as another colonising strategy, and notes that “The power of creation is inextricably linked to the power of naming—God lends his naming authority to Adam as the mark of his rule, and the woman is "called Woman because she was taken out of man.” The question of naming played an important role not only in gender mythology but also in colonial narratives in which the "discoverer" gave names as a mark of possession or as bearers of a European global perspective. "Peripheral" places and their inhabitants were often stripped of their

"unpronounceable" indigenous names and outfitted with names marking them as the property of the colonizer" (Shohat, 1991:46-47).

3.6.4 Encountering the Native woman

Encountering the native woman is a pivotal moment in the process of colonisation. The "pictorial representations of the "discovery" tend to centre on a nude Native American woman as metaphorising the welcoming "new-found land" (Shohat, 1991:48). The native woman becomes an object in the colonial discourse. Her "nudity is contrasted with the discoverer's heavy clothing, even though she is part of an environment where nudity is not a category to find strange" (Shohat, 1991:48). In postcolonial terms, this native woman is called the woman at the contact zones.

3.6.5 The Dark Continent

In the colonial strategies present in certain films, the coloniser embarks on a journey to an unknown culture, even at times to an exotic culture. On this journey, the ethnography gaze is present, for it is on its quest to explore the cultures of the so-called 'Dark Continent.' This journey to the Dark Continent is a process of civilising and sensitising the people of that continent, and "The films thus reproduces colonialist mechanisms by which the orient, is rendered, the devoid of any active historical narrative role becomes the object of study and spectacle" (Shohat, 1991:49). In this process, portrayals of uncivilization and underdevelopment are foregrounded, and because the natives are 'poor in culture and knowledge,' the coloniser, the Adam-like character, brings knowledge, development, and civilisation.

Another prominent component in the ethnographic gaze of the 'dark continent' is the sexuality of the native women in the land to be colonised. This takes its form in the Orient metaphor. The Orient as a metaphor for sexuality is encapsulated by the recurring figure of the veiled woman. The inaccessibility of the veiled woman, mirroring the mystery of the Orient itself, requires a process of Western unveiling for comprehension. Veiled women in Orientalist paintings, photographs, and films expose flesh, ironically, more than they conceal it. The sexuality of women becomes a mystery to be unfolded by the coloniser. Shohat notes that it is this process of exploring the female other, the process of literally denuding her, which allegorises the Western masculinist power of possession. The metaphor for her land becomes available for Western/European penetration and knowledge. This is how the intersection of the

epistemological and the sexual in colonial discourse echoes the ‘dark continent’ (Shoat, 2019:57).

3.6.6 The Colonised Gaze

In imperial and colonial discourses, a central theme of ‘rescue’ is prevalent in the fight for over-representation. The Western coloniser gendered the land as a woman not only to be taken and explored but also to be rescued from her environment. This is projected more concretely as rescue stories in films primarily for Western and non-Western women—African, Asian, Arab, and Native American people. Shohat argues that:

> The justification of Western expansion, then, becomes linked to issues of sexuality. The intersection of colonial and gender discourses involves a shifting, contradictory subject positioning, whereby a Western woman can simultaneously constitute "centre" and "periphery," identity and alterity. A Western woman, in these narratives, exists in a relation of subordination to Western men and relation of domination toward "non-Western" men and women” (Shohat, 1991:63).

This textual relationality is consistent with the traditional representation of colonial women, who have played, albeit with a difference, an oppressive role against colonised people (both men and women), at times, deliberately perpetuating the legacy of the Empire.

In analysing the colonial gaze, issues of gender and race should be considered. The superior being is not only the men but also the white American woman. Shohat states that, in many films, colonial women become the instrument of the White male vision and are thus granted a gaze more powerful than not only that of non-Western women but also of non-Western men (Shohat, 1991:63). In the colonial gaze and context, because of the interpretational complexities of power structures and the representation of the ‘other,’ women can be granted ‘positional superiority’ over the men of the non-Western/non- European men and women. One of the complexities of the male gaze, however, is that Western women typically also suffer under the male gaze. This is the intersectionality present in the process of the colonial gaze.

In short, the debate on gender within the colonial context indicates that Western women may hold a relatively powerful role on the surface of the text, as vehicles for a patriarchal gaze rather than a colonial gaze. In these instants of tension between sexual and national hierarchies, especially as embodied by the relationship between

men of the developing worlds and women of the 'developed countries', national identity (associated with the white female character) is comparatively privileged over sexual identity (associated with the dark male character). At the same time, the same ambivalence is extended to Developing World males whose punishment for inter-racial lust is invariably followed by spectatorial pleasure for a male sexual gaze as ephemerally conveyed by a darker man. Moreover, Shohat argues that:

> These contradictions of national and sexual hierarchies, present in embryo in early cinema, are accentuated in the recent nostalgia-for-empire (liberal) films which foreground a female protagonist, presumably appealing to feminist codes, while reproducing colonialist narrative and cinematic power arrangements (Shohat, 1991:64).

In essence, one should be aware of these complexities when critically examining the colonial gaze.

3.6.7 Sexual Violence and Rape

The rhythmic gender dominance in colonialist discourses and films, characteristic of Western ethnic norms places the white woman or man at the forefront of the plot. The white woman then is portrayed as the desired object of the white male Adam-like protagonist and the contender. When the Developing World marginalised woman does not serve as a metaphor for her virgin native land, she is portrayed against the white woman as the desired object of male protagonists and antagonists. Marginalised in the story, women from the Developing World— when not written and portrayed as symbols for their virgin land — are portrayed as sexually immoral subalterns. When depicting instances of rape, the women are portrayed as the ones who 'ask for it' because they are sexually immoral and enjoy the 'intercourse' with the Adam-like protagonist. The instance of sexual violence and rape that the white man who has habitually raped Developing World women communicates is that of the so-called implicit rapist impulses of the black man for the white woman, yet his own rapist tendencies have been veiled and justified by the Developing World woman's sexual immorality. Shohat concurs as she notes examples of these in films:

> Even when not involving rape, the possibilities of erotic interaction in films prior to the sixties were severely limited by apartheid-style ethnic/racial codes. The same Hollywood that at times could project mixed love stories between Anglo-Americans and Latins and Arabs (especially if incarnated by White American actors and actresses such as Valentino in *The Sheik,* Dorothy Lamour in *The Road to Morocco (1942),* or Maureen O'Hara in *They Met in Argentina (1941)* was completely inhibited in relation to African, Asian, or Native American sexuality (Shohat, 1991:66).

Further, Shohat (1991:67) argues firmly that sexual violence has been at the heart of the lived experiences of Developing World women at the contact zones of the colonial culture.

With her analysis of the postcolonial elements in film, Shohat becomes a conversation partner in the articulation of the colonial strategies present in film theory. Her analysis of these elements has guided the present chapter. Thus, it is important to note that, although a feminist reading of (post)colonial discourse must take into account the national and historical specificities of that discourse, it is equally important to chart the broader structural analogies in the representation of diverse Developing World cultures. (Post)Colonial narratives, as we have seen, serve to define the "West" through metaphors of rape, phantasies of rescue, and eroticised geographies. The popular culture of colonialism has tended to rely on a structurally similar gendered discourse within different national and historical moments, a discourse challenged by resistant counter-narratives.

Considering the principles discussed in the previous chapter on postcolonial feminist biblical interpretation, it is evident that there are overlapping and unifying strategies between these two approaches. However, because biblical texts and film will be read and analysed concurrently throughout this study, it is important that we further examine all contributing factors that influence how both disciplines of film and biblical interpretation are understood. Biblical hermeneutics and popular culture are both important contributing factors that should be probed to read and analyse adequately both film and the Bible concurrently.

3.7 Film and Biblical Hermeneutics

Scripture and cinematography draw on various forms of media, emerge from different cultural backgrounds, and have distinct social roles. Nevertheless, Scripture and films resonate with each other. They interact in different ways and at different levels. It is helpful to note that in the twenty-first century, specifically in a postmodern and globalised world, films (popular culture) and the Bible do intersect. The Bible and film/popular culture have been related to or used concurrently. A strong comparison can be made between film theory functions and traditional religious agencies. While films may not be as explicitly religious as churches, many religious subjects and principles are transmitted into film. Most movies discuss faith and offer opportunities

to explore and interpret these films from a redemptive perspective. Their essence, therefore, implies a form of interpretation.

3.7.1 Intersections of Biblical Hermeneutics and Film

George Aichele, who has written extensively on the intersections of film and the Bible, argues in the introduction of a book he edited, *Screening Scripture: Intertextual Connections between Scripture and Film,* that cinematic artistry does contribute to biblical scholarship (Aichele *et al.*, 2002: ix). He affirms that there is not only one true understanding of texts, and that a conversation between particular movies and the relations to particular scriptures can be established. This endeavour requires a "thick description" of both partners in the conversation. This analysis should not propose a definitive or final interpretation of either one. Film and biblical texts should be brought into a genuine exchange that will open up illuminating connections between them, that is, open new insights into ancient scriptures while providing cross-cultural illumination of popular film and contemporary culture. Aichele expounds Larry Kritzer's view that in the relation between the Bible and popular culture/film, the hermeneutical flow is reversed. Certain films transform the reading and the interpretation of the future readings of the ancient texts, but these ancient texts must be read and interpreted in light of the context of the successor text (Aichele *et al*., 2002: x). He argues that much of the contemporary texts or contexts are understood in light of the ancient contexts.

Building on the above argument, Conrad Ostwalt in his article, "The Bible, Religion, and Film in the Twenty-first Century," agrees that one can say with confidence that the interest in the intersection of religion, the Bible, spirituality, and popular culture has never been stronger (2013:40). Relating to Oswalt, Alison Bach in her article "Cracking the Production Code Watching Biblical Scholars Read Films," states that the idea of biblical scholars incorporating film study into their work is not a sudden development (Bach, 1999:12). Rather, in the past few years, scholarly interest in the Bible and film has grown steadily, parallel to the development of both cultural studies and the elevation of popular culture to academic heights.

Moreover, Anita Cloete (2019:1) concurs with Punt in her introduction to the volume, *Interdisciplinary Reflections on the Interplay between Religion, Film and Youth,* edited by her, that films and religion are often closely associated in contemporary society and that the links between film and the Bible demonstrate this connection. As such, Cloete

explains that the intersection has gone beyond portrayals of biblical narratives or depictions. Rather, it has provided meanings and perceptions, and it influences the interpretation of the Bible and film specifically how this is embodied in contemporary society. However, in the past, the implications of biblical narratives for movies were the primary focus but the implications of films for the interpretation of biblical narratives interpretations have not been explored much.

I concur with this argument and therefore argue that the characterisation of Krotoa needs to be decolonised, for it is concealed under the account of historical facts but it holds vast colonial and imperialistic connotations. This is important to note because the relationship between the Bible and film calls for acknowledgement of both the intertextual embeddedness of all concerned, as well the triadic nature of comparisons (Cloete, 2019:11).

Geert Hallbäck and Annika Hvithamar in the introduction of the book they edited, *The Bible in Contemporary Cinema* (2008), articulate the following crucial considerations about film and religion:

> According to popular theories of secularization, it is astounding how biblical elements remain a significant theme in contemporary fiction. Biblical narratives are transformed to the screen and biblical themes are incorporated into the universe of cinema both explicitly and on a more latent scale, in psychological melodrama, fantasy and horror movies and romantic comedy. There is no doubt that these biblical elements often communicate a religious worldview. On the other hand, this exposure does not automatically result in a religious worldview among the viewers. Therefore, the study of these films could be central to an understanding of the multi-facetted religiosity, which is communicated by popular culture (Hallbäck & Hvithamar, 2008:2).

The Bible remains an important form of reference in the process of sense-making of contemporary society, and therefore interpretations of the Bible and Bible-themed films possess the potential to transform the lives of the viewers or impose and strengthen hegemonic ideologies and stereotypes.

3.8 Conclusion of Chapter

This chapter has shown that to adequately analyse and examine the characterisation of Krotoa from a postcolonial feminist perspective, film theory, specifically, feminist film theory is inadequate because of its tangible limitations. Film theory portrays and applies a patriarchal ideology, which is oppressive to women. Although feminist film theory, on the other hand, has transformed the artistic field and discipline of film theory,

it has not sufficiently examined all the complexities and multilayers of oppression like race, class, ethnicity and geographical location, which women in their diversity experience. In essence, feminist film theory has its own limitations. As such, a postcolonial feminist film theory is needed because it acknowledges and foregrounds the complexities underlying films rather than focus merely on gender and the “male” gaze. It recognises multilayers of oppression and challenges encountered in the field of film theory, that is, other issues such as the colonial gaze or the ethnicity gaze. These complexities have not been considered by feminist film theory. Further, this chapter recognised and acknowledged that film theory and biblical hermeneutics do not operate in a vacuum and there are indeed contributing factors that should be considered when critically analysing film theory and biblical texts concurrently.

CHAPTER 4

4. RAHAB: HEROINE, TRAITOR, VICTIM?

> I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that dread of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt in fear before you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond the Jordan, to Siphon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. As soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no courage left in us because of you. The Lord your God is indeed God in heaven above and on earth below. Now then, since I have dealt kindly with you, swear to me by the Lord that you, in turn, will deal kindly with my family. The men said to her, "Our life for yours!" (Joshua 2:9-14 NRSV).

Interpreters have perceived and portrayed Rahab in Joshua 2 and 6 as the poster girl or archetype for faith. However, she is also portrayed and perceived either as a traitor or as a heroine who came to the aid of Yahweh's people. These perceptions of Rahab as a paradigm for faith, a traitor, or the good native that betrayed her own people do not come without complexities because they are subject to the interpreter or interpretive community. The present chapter interrogates these claims and the portrayals of Rahab from different perspectives, focusing on the works of various scholars on Rahab. Rahab's portrayals as heroine, prostitute and traitor of her people will be explored. As such, this chapter aims to reread the story of Rahab the biblical character or rather her historical view as a traitor or heroine. The question is, to whom is Rahab a heroine, and to whom is she a traitor? This analysis will attempt to re-read her story by investigating the imperial strategies present in the story and seeking an alternative perspective of Rahab. The story of Rahab is not a narrative that could be missed, for it is one of the most popular narratives in the Bible especially within my geographical context and social location. It is considered a narrative of faith and a narrative of survival.

As stated previously in the introduction of this study, it is important to note that the story of Rahab as the traitor of her people is told from a perspective in which the biblical writers take the reader on a theatre journey. The character Rahab whom we encounter in Joshua 2 and 6 is portrayed as synonymous with a traitor, a trickster, the 'good native,' the prostitute who negotiated her way out of death. Rahab's character in Joshua 2 and 6 has been 'othered' by the coloniser and her own people and her name conjures negative connotations. Questioning her othering by her own people – because she lived on the outskirts of the city, which was designated for people

excluded from the community – offers quite some insight. Given the communal context of the Old Testament, being on the periphery of the community was seen as a form of punishment and rejection. People who did not belong and did not fit into the binaries of that specific social context were placed on the outskirts of the community.

This chapter seeks to discuss the various portrayals of Rahab, to analyse and to substantiate the argument that her character was filtered through the perspectives of the biblical writers, translators, and interpreters. Her identity has been constructed from a certain perspective. Given the multiple complexities of imperialism and patriarchy in the Rahab narrative, analysing the literary and historical-critical context of the book of Joshua is important to deconstruct the hegemonic portrayal of Rahab and to make sense of the Rahab narrative as a whole within its original context.

4.1 Historical-critical Method

The historical-critical approach entails various other critical approaches such as redaction, source, and form criticism. These approaches offer the opportunity for a nuanced analysis of the text. They build an understanding of the world behind the text. The ultimate goal of these approaches is to demonstrate the process of the emergence of the literary unit based on the oral traditions through form criticism, engage in the literary analysis through source criticism and consequently focus on the final redaction process of the text through redaction criticism. The Rahab narrative in Joshua 2 and 6 is no exception to the rule. It has been a central topic of interest to the historical-critical analysts.

4.1.1 Literary and Redaction Analysis of the Rahab Narrative

In the Hebrew biblical tradition, the story of Rahab or rather the book of Joshua falls under the category of the historical books. Andrzej Toczyski in his book, *The Geometrics of the Rahab Story*, notes that the ancient tradition separating the book of Joshua from the Pentateuch has been challenged by many scholars, leading to the hypothesis of the Hexateuch (Toczyski, 2018:93).

This analysis of Joshua has revealed and invited interesting debates about the compilation and redaction of the Rahab story. However, certain aspects require further examination, specifically the second chapter of Joshua. An in-depth analysis of the synopsis of Joshua 2:12–21 have shown that there are redundant repetitions of what

has already been said in Joshua 2:4. Rahab in this pericope helps the spies to go down through the window after they had reached an agreement. However, she speaks to them again after they are already let down the window. The spies moving out of the window reflects a different portrayal. They have been passive participants in the entire narrative but after Rahab saves their lives and helps them down the window, the spies are portrayed as taking initiative once again to become active participants. These contradictions could be justified through the principles of source criticism and it could be argued that they subscribe to the 'J' and 'E' sources, blended in to convey a more logical account of the Rahab story. Nonetheless, the textual contradictions or the tensions present reveal a possible error that may have occurred during the composition or redaction of Joshua 2 (Toczyski, 2018:95).

Focusing a little more closely on the textual tensions in the Rahab narrative, Toczyski (2018) argues that the narrative has been influenced greatly by the Deuteronomistic History theory. Martin Noth also has reflected on the close connection between the books of Deuteronomy, Kings and Joshua, specifically in relation to their theological ideas, style, and their vocabulary (Noth 1991:15). Analysing Joshua 1 to 2, Noth suggests a central theme of Benjaminite conquest which set off in the pre-monarchic period. The Rahab narrative specifically chapter 2 contains great discrepancies and has been disputed at length by many scholars. Noth argues that Joshua 2 has to be a later invention added to the literary unit of Joshua. Furthermore, Joshua 2 and 6 were not only a later invention added to the literary unit, but they probably also had more than one redactor. Toczyski articulates Noth's argument as follows

> Noth believed that Joshua chapter 2 is a local aetiological saga which developed in the Gilgal sanctuary and only under the hand of the summer received a fixed literary form. Eventually, this production was adopted by the Dtr's as a later intervention (Toczyski, 2018:95).

The Rahab story, Noth contends, is an addition to fit the Deuteronomistic conquest theme. His argument is based on the incoherence and disjunction between Joshua 2 and Joshua 6. In Joshua 2, we find the spies viewing the land. The basic premise is to demonstrate a military attack with colonising objectives for the land and its resources whereas, in chapter 6, the conquest of the land is presented as purely sanctioned by Yahweh alone. Given the textual tensions between these two accounts of Rahab, Toczyski (2018:96) agrees with Noth's argument that Joshua 2 was not part of the original Deuteronomistic stratum but rather a secondary addition which was

created and applied to convey a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of the Israelite religion.

The view corresponds with the findings of decolonial scholars like Dube (2000:72) and McKinlay (2004:17), who argue that the authors, as well as the redactors of the biblical text, had imperial and patriarchal objectives, which fit the theme of conquest in the book of Joshua. Building on Noth's finding that the Joshua account was added to fit the Deuteronomistic theme, Dube (2000:17) contends that Rahab's conversion speech is a construction of the author and the redactor's fantasies to fit in the ideology of Israelite identity, Holy War and conquest embedded in imperialism and patriarchy. As such, we can indeed conclude that Rahab has been a victim of the coloniser's pen. Thus, Rahab's complicity in the eradication of her own people is also disputed and undermined. The above view demonstrates that Rahab is a victim, set up for failure by the coloniser's pen. In Joshua 2, Rahab is constructed to fit the Deuteronomistic theme of conquest in the book of Joshua.

With the help of Toczyski's (2018) observation of the Rahab narrative, specifically Joshua 2, we have shown that this portrayal of Rahab reveals discrepancies in the editorial composition of the text of Joshua 2 and 6. Literary and redaction criticism are engaged as tools to show that Joshua 2 was adapted and expounded from its pre-existing form to serve an intended ideology of the authors and redactors (Toczyski, 2018:106). Employing the specific literary approaches bears the potential for uncovering uniquely life-giving and refreshing interpretive perspectives to the biblical texts, and offering alternatives to the dominant, normative compilations of the historical biblical texts.

4.1.2 Literary Meaning of the Rahab Narrative

The literary context of the Rahab narrative in Joshua 2 and 6 presents new avenues for interpretation. Thus, in the quest for liberating interpretations, analysing the literary context of the narrative is pivotal. Doing this would allow a synchronic approach to the text that would uncover meanings of the text which have been concealed within the world of the text. The focus here, then, will be to examine some avenues of the narrative itself as well as the coherence of the final form of the text in its redacted form and ultimately connecting the meaning of the text to the reader.

As discussed previously, Joshua 2 as part of the original biblical canon has been disputed. To understand the text in its present form, it has been argued that the text passed through the hands of more than one redactor to fit the agenda of the redactors. Toczyski considers Joshua 2 to be a narrative with the central premise of emphasising the negotiation skills of Rahab. According to Toczyski (2018:108), the text functions as a self-contained tale giving a reason for or making sense of the Israelite history. Secondly, Joshua 2:1–11 is regarded as a spy narrative. The aetiological feature of the story is to assure Israel of the divine intervention of God in the conquest of the land. Thus, the Rahab narrative places emphasis on conversion and obedience to God, as well as the promise of the life this conversion holds. Interestingly, the conversion of Rahab undermines the Deuteronomy law about foreigners and overthrows this law and perspective. Rahab's conversion highlights the ambiguity around the literary composition of the text.

An interesting consideration of the reason for the Rahab narrative is captured by Toczyski (2018:109), who articulates Robert Polzin's argument that the Israelites were not worthy of receiving God grace or the promise of God (land) because they were not a righteous people, but, they received the grace of God anyway. The grace of God is no indication of their obedience. Rather, it emphasises the everlasting grace of God. God gave the land to Israel not because they deserved it, but because of the wickedness of the Canaanites. This same principle, he argues, happened in the case of Rahab. As the Israelites were not made accountable for their disobedience, Rahab also did not get what she deserved, which was death and destruction. God dealt gracefully with Rahab because she submitted to God. Toczyski (2018:110) notes that the story of Rahab presents God's complex relationship with Israel and Rahab as a lucky recipient of this strange relationship between God and Israel. Lori Rowlett concurs that, in Rahab, the special bond between Yahweh and Israel has consummated again (Rowlett, 1996:32). Ultimately, the meaning of the Rahab narrative lies not in her relationship or her interactions with the Israelites but in the fact that she has been placed at the centre of God fulfilling God's promise to the Israelites. Rahab receiving a happy ending is a lucky bonus.

4.2 Close Reading of the Rahab Narrative

In trying to uncover the literary meaning of the Rahab story, three basic meanings should be highlighted, according to Toczyski (2018:111). The first is to discredit the efficiency of Joshua's learning style. Sending the spies to survey the Canaanite territory was a lack of good judgement on the part of Joshua; the reader could not expect any good news coming from such an order. Secondly, the other meaning of the text would be to place the glory of God at the centre of wickedness (the prostitute and her immorality). Thirdly, the basic meaning is to emphasise the inclusive nature of Israel's theology.

An important observation of the Rahab narrative made by many scholars has to do with the so-called humour found in the narrative (Jackson, 2012; Runions, 2011; Toczyski, 2018). The humour is in the spies being dispossessed of their masculinity in Joshua 2 and 6. The spies are supposed to be these masculine, strong and clever characters, and in the normal trajectory of masculinist and colonialist narratives, they would find a damsel in distress and rescue her. Instead, their lives were left in the hands of a woman. They were protected by a woman of low social status, a prostitute, and a foreigner. The spies, who were on a quest to reconnoitre Rahab's native land, were supposed to speak positively to the Israelites, yet when they returned to Joshua, it appears that they had become agents sent not by Joshua but by Rahab. The leadership of Joshua is depicted humorously; he sent out incompetent and weak spies who could not protect themselves or think for themselves. Rather, they were used by Rahab who is portrayed as a calculating prostitute to ensure her safety. Melissa Jackson finds meaning in this narrative through comedy. She argues that "the comedy of this narrative functions to draw boundaries that subvert power structures and to enable survival" (Jackson, 2012:85). The emphasis here is not so much in the sense of the survival of Rahab being a joke; rather, the joke is on the inefficiency of the spies employed by Joshua.

4.2.1 Social Context of Joshua

After considering the literary and redaction context of the Rahab story, the socio-political context from which the text has originated should be considered also. Examining the social context is a pivotal approach to decolonising and making sense of biblical texts in contemporary society. This is in line with Toczyski's argument that

"the integrative process of all texts should be considered in relation to the distinctive social conditions in which they are shaped" (Toczyski, 2018:116). Thus, this section will consider the social context in which the book of Joshua originated and was shaped.

Rowlett (1996:17) helps us to be attentive to the central theme of violence in the socio-political context of the book of Joshua which is deeply embedded in the ideology of conquest and identity. The adoption of the Israelite identity and ideology is the ultimate goal of the book of Joshua. As in the case of any colonial quest, ideology is a central goal of the coloniser (McKinlay, 2004:37). The social context in which the Rahab narrative was shaped was one of warfare (Holy War from the perspective of the Israelites) and of identity politics. Rowlett (1992) explains the ideology of warfare as follows:

> The Canaanites are to be destroyed by military action with divine assistance so that the Israelites can possess the land. The focus throughout most of the book of Joshua is on the marginal cases, exploring the questions: who is included, who is excluded, what are the criteria for inclusion and most importantly why? (Rowlett, 1992:17).

Thus, warfare was at the heart of the socio-political context of Joshua.

4.2.2 Context of Violence

Furthermore, the political climate in the book of Joshua is centred on violence. It takes the form of forceful methods of submission, coercion, and inducement. Not complying with the insider-outsider ideologies of Joshua could result in eradication. Not submitting to the jurisdiction of the authority figures could easily result in a person being deemed an outsider, and the punishment for being the other or an outsider is death.

Rowlett (1992:16) describes the context in which the book of Joshua was shaped. She argues that the conquest plotline in Joshua, specifically in the Rahab account, being part of the Deuteronomistic history, was written in the aftermath of the Assyrian rule. Thus, it was promptly revised by an exiled editor or redactor. Further, she contends that the core text of Joshua emerged during King Josiah's rule. At this time, his throne was not secure as a result of the Assyrian dynasty which had collapsed. This was before the onset of the rising of the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

The basic premise of Joshua is that Yahweh had given the land of Canaan to the Israelites; therefore, they had full rights to conquer the land and its people. The notion of insider-outsider is central throughout the book as alluded to before. The 'us,' which

means Israel, is the intended camp the reader should identify with. The Canaanites are the outsider, the wicked ones (in their own land). They do not serve Yahweh and do not deserve the land and the gracious presence and promise of life from Yahweh. The book of Joshua, as Toczyski (2018:116) argues, reinforced national identity during King Josiah's reign.

Rowlett (1992) also firmly argues that the context of Joshua has appropriated the rhetoric of violence. This rhetoric of violence is embodied by the oppressor who transforms the minds of the oppressed into tools of self-reconstruction. Rahab then is a perfect example of this rhetoric. Rahab, who was an outsider, becomes an insider through the rhetoric of violence appropriated by the oppressor. She became a tool of self-reconstruction, being exploited because of her need to be a part of some community which the Israelites offered her. The guiding ideology of the book of Joshua, then, is not focused on ethnicity or the purity thereof as instructed by the Hebrew Scriptures. Rather, it is reciprocal adherence to authoritative institutions, such as hierarchal political systems of violence in the book of Joshua.

4.2.3 Holy-War

The book of Joshua seems to be a new beginning for the Israelites. After roaming the wilderness for 40 years, the people would experience Yahweh's promise of land, the Holy Land. This promise, however, took shape with the invasion of Canaan and the eradication of its people so that the people of Israel could create their own community in the Holy Land, which Yahweh had promised. As such, Joshua 1-12 focuses on the Holy War, in which the primary military objective is to conquer the land and to establish and strengthen Israelite identity. Donna Fewell states that the concern to define identity controls the logic of the Holy War in Joshua. All the native inhabitants must be destroyed because they threatened Israel's identity: "Goaded by divinely ordained intolerance Israelites are pitted against Canaanites in the struggle for differentiation" (Fewell, 1992:69). The only exception to this threatened identity is submission to Yahweh's superiority. Rahab in Joshua 2:9–14 and the Gibeonites in Joshua 9 are examples of this exception. They were outsiders who became insiders through submission. In chapter 7, we encounter the insider 'Achan' and his family who did not submit to the Israelite identity and worship of Yahweh; therefore, he became an outsider, rejected from the Israelite community. Fewell (1992:69) further argues that fluid identity boundaries render nationalist categories ambivalent and call into question

the obsession with annihilating outsiders. In the socio-political context of Joshua, Rahab is the only named character at the centre of the annihilation of outsiders, but she received mercy because she adopted the insider-outsider position.

4.2.4 Prostitution in the Socio-historical Context of Joshua

The rhetoric of violence in Joshua, as discussed earlier, takes shape in various forms; it is systemic and literal. In the case of Rahab, it is correct to say that she endured various forms of violence, being placed on the periphery of her social location as a woman of marginal status in her own native land. Joshua 2 introduces Rahab as a prostitute, which is attributive to her identity. Phyllis Bird argues that Rahab had to be a harlot to serve the Israelite ideology (Bird, 1997). Thus, in the process of interpretation, we should examine and consider what prostitution meant in the social context of Joshua, and why it was appropriated by the author.

Prostitution in the context of Canaan carried a similar stigma to the prostitution we find in contemporary society. In the ancient Near East, there seemed to be ambivalence in the reception of prostitutes. In a sense, they were desired objects, but in another sense, they were despised. Historical scholars have paid much attention to understanding how biblical texts functioned in their context by reading the texts as mirroring the cultic practices of the time. This premise is quite interesting, specifically, in relation to the Rahab narrative wherein she is portrayed as a prostitute. Wilda Gafney describes prostitution in ancient Israel as follows:

> Actual sex-work, metaphorical sex-work, and accusations of sex-work and name-calling based on the low regard for sex-work and sex-workers run together as tangled, nearly inseparable threads in the biblical text and in its history of translation and interpretation. In the biblical canon, the language of prostitution, harlotry, and whoredom are *(sic)* used nearly indiscriminately for (a) women who do sex-work, (b) anyone who works in the service of a deity other than the Israelite one, (c) anyone who worships another deity, and (d) the land as a result of foreign worship (and occasionally immoral acts including sexual ones). The translation of z-n-h terms reflects the cultural biases of each generation of translators (Gafney, 2017:143).

The portrayal of Rahab encompasses this entire articulation. Prostitution or harlotry alluded to the marginal status in society, and to some form of immoral behaviour which mostly is a direct understanding of the term or it could refer to a woman's infidelity to her community and to her husband. Prostitution implies low social status and bad reputation; nothing good should be expected from a woman who is a prostitute. She

has no moral compass, courage, or insight. Bird captures the understanding of a harlot in the context of Joshua as follows:

> The harlot is viewed as lacking in wisdom, morals, and religious knowledge. Her low status and despised state must be due to her unfortunate circumstances or personal fault and immorality, she is commonly viewed as a predator preying on the wickedness of men, mercenary out of her own gain, an opportunist with no loyalty beyond herself, acknowledging no principle or charity in her action (Bird, 1997:214).

Toczyski (2018) reviews the various scholars' understanding of Rahab in her context, which is regarded as cultic. The social context of many texts mirrors the cultic existence of the time. Toczyski captures the views of many scholars like Gustav Hőlscher (1919) who argue that Rahab was a cultic prostitute and that other prostitutes in the land of Israel were descendants of Rahab. Some also see Rahab as a "priestess for a local deity. Her independence status without a husband as well as the structure of her house might indicate such a profession" (Toczyski, 2018:102). The argument is that her house had a special place of worship, and this was where the spies took refuge. Again, this view portrays Yahweh as God above all deities and the overwhelming power of Yahweh over and against all other gods. As a priestess of a local deity, Rahab still submitted to the superior deity, Yahweh.

It was in this social context that the Rahab narrative took shape. In Rahab, portrayed and introduced as a harlot, is embedded the rhetoric of violence appropriated all too well in the book of Joshua. What Rahab as a harlot signifies will be elaborated on later in this chapter, but bearing in mind the social context of Joshua encourages an informative interpretation of the Rahab story Joshua 2 and 6. Understanding the social convention or perceptions associated with being a harlot helps one's analysis of the author's characterisation of Rahab as a harlot. This understanding of harlots is important and needed for the development of the plot and ideology of the Rahab story and of the overall book of Joshua, as the concept has shaped much of the meaning of the text.

4.3 Rahab in Christian Tradition

As mentioned before, it is important to analyse how Rahab has been understood, portrayed, and interpreted in history in order to deconstruct those interpretations and constructions as a decolonising strategy. This is a counter-approach to colonising strategies.

In Christian tradition, the story of Rahab has not always been read as a unit in the context of Joshua 2 and 6. Rather, her characterisation in Joshua 2 and 6 often has been read intertextually. The most popular references to her are found in Matthew 1:5, Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:24-26. These references to her 'faith' have been prioritised and have been much admired in the Christian tradition. My observation is that in the Christian Bible, Rahab is moralised. She is uncomplicated and celebrated for her unwavering faith in Yahweh rather than for some complexities of betrayal, immorality and conquest that are evident in the Joshua account. Further, Rahab in Christian tradition has been celebrated for her part or actions which ensured the survival of Christian traditions.

As the ancestor of David and subsequently the ancestor of Jesus, her actions have shaped the Christian tradition, as we know it today. The Matthew account presents Rahab as the mother of Boaz, the wife of Salmon. This links Rahab to King David, ultimately presenting her as an ancestor of Jesus. Toczyski (2018:78) disputes this portrayal as he challenges the given family tree of Rahab. He argues that there is no solid account of Rahab being married to Salmon therefore, her being the ancestor of Jesus is highly unlikely. He considers the alternative reason Rahab may have been thought to be the ancestor of Jesus, and this once again reveals that she may have only been used as a literary construction to emphasise the anticipated possibility that God would offer salvation even to the 'unchosen' ones who could be chosen by God, like Rahab. Moreover, Rahab in the lineage of Christ could influence the Christian church's understanding of the image of Christ's church, specifically, in relation to inclusion.

4.3.1 Rahab as Example of Salvation

Rahab's faith and deeds of faith have granted her a ticket to life in 'abundance,' life in Christ. The New Testament portrayals of Rahab focus solely on Rahab's faith in Yahweh which led to her deeds of faith. As noted before, there is no consideration of the complexities of the context of the Holy War and the power play at hand in the Old Testament account of Rahab. However, Hebrews 11 and James 2 celebrate her for her acts of faith. As such, she is an example of how salvation is offered by God.

In the book of Hebrews, Rahab holds a place amongst the ancestors of faith. She is celebrated for her faith without any contempt for her identity as a prostitute and a

foreigner. Her salvation cancelled out all her inadequacies. In the book of James, Rahab again is used as an example of faith, as she fits the author's objectives for the book. According to Toczyski (2018:80), “the complex biblical story is again reduced to an embryonic and one-dimensional pattern for Christian paraenesis. In this view, Rahab becomes the personification of Christian hospitality and acts of mercy.”

Interestingly, the author of James refers to the Israelite spies as *ἄγγελοι* (‘messengers’), and sees Rahab’s good deeds as life-giving, totally disregarding Rahab’s fellow compatriots who were destroyed so that this life-giving process could be established. Toczyski (2018:82) also considers the image of Rahab in the first epistle of Clements, which explains with a direct link to the Exodus 12 narrative that the act of hanging the red scarlet was a metaphor for the blood of Rahab’s people as well as the blood of the Lord. In this blood, one finds redemption and hope.

To the biblical authors, Rahab’s acts of faith serve as a well-rounded portrayal of what God’s salvation entails. Therefore, her example should be followed, as she then becomes a figure of transformation in Christ.

4.4 Rahab the Heroine

Rahab is one of the most well-known characters in the Bible. Her character has enjoyed much analysis and attention from various perspectives. The character of Rahab features in Joshua 2 and 6, where she singlehandedly ensured the survival of the Israelites and their conquest of Canaan. It is observed that her action saved the Israelites and preserved the victory, history, and trajectory of the Israelites’ survival in the wilderness. Rahab is one of the biblical ‘others,’ as McKinlay (2004) notes. The Old Testament typically upholds Israelite ideology and those who do not fit the ideology of the Israelites were generally ‘othered.’ Rahab has been othered because of her Canaanite descent, yet through the betrayal of her own people and the acceptance of Israelite ideology, she became a heroine to the Israelites and was portrayed as a paradigm for faith because she proclaimed the superiority of the God of the Israelites. Rahab’s portrayal as heroine is substantiated through biblical witness:

> Remembered as a paradigm of faith for Israel, she lived on in the Christian tradition to be listed in the Gospel of Matthew (Mt. 1 & 5) as an ancestor of Jesus and hymned for her faithfulness in the letter to the Hebrews (Heb. 11 & 13) (McKinlay, 2008:37).

Rahab is perceived as the key agent in the subjugation of Jericho, and she became an Israelite hero, thus, setting the history of Christian witness in motion.

This heroism of Rahab does not come without ambivalence. There are great ambiguities, paradoxes, and inconsistencies in the story of this heroic character, Rahab. The portrayal of heroism in the character of Rahab needs to be interrogated. One should ask, why is she portrayed in this way? And whom does this portrayal benefit? Reading Rahab or the biblical narrative of Joshua 2 and 6 as a culturally defined 'coloured' woman based in Stellenbosch with all its complexities, this portrayal of Rahab as heroine makes me suspicious and indeed, I do agree that there is great ambivalence in describing Rahab as a heroine. My question is to whom and why is she a heroine?

Rahab is the main character in Joshua 2 and 6, one of the only two named characters in these two chapters, the only other named character is Joshua. She came across the spies or rather they passively entered her house in a quest to find shelter from the Canaanite officials. These spies were sent by Joshua to search the territory of Canaan for a crack or opening that would help Israel attack the Canaanites. Rahab, therefore, is identified as the crack, the breach, that would assist the Israelites in their quest. The King of Jericho must have been on high alert for the possible invasion by the Israelites. When he learnt that the spies were probably in the house of Rahab, he sent out his officials to order her to bring out the Israelite spies. Rahab did not do as she was commanded by her king but protected the Israelite spies by deceiving the officials and sending them on a witch-hunt. McKinlay considers the possibility that Rahab did not know the ethnic identity of the spies; therefore, she probably did not lie but omitted the truth.

After the confrontation with the Canaanite officials and her display of heroism, Rahab transformed into a full Israelite ideologue in verse 8. She submitted to the God of Israel and she proclaimed the superiority of this God. It is implied in this pericope that she must have been familiar with the Hebrew scriptural tradition. She declared that Yahweh had given her native land over to the Israelites to possess. McKinlay finds this submission of Rahab suspicious, as she questions how Rahab a Canaanite woman and a prostitute could be so familiar with the Hebrew scriptural tradition. McKinlay (2004:40) plays with the idea that the Israelite spies possibly gave Rahab a "crash

course in Deuteronomistic theology." This is the only logical explanation for how Rahab could have in-depth knowledge of the Hebrew Scripture.

4.5 Rahab the Harlot

Interesting information wrapped in the portrayal of Rahab's heroism is her profession as a prostitute. She is called Rahab, the *zona*. My question then would be, why is this introduction necessary and why does it shape or contribute to her portrayal as heroine? Why is her profession noteworthy to the author? Does she being a prostitute make her more likely to betray her people or can one argue that her depiction as a prostitute is merely a conceptual metaphor? Could it be that these men have not come to view the land-only but the women of the land as well? Rahab is the woman at the contact zone, a woman who suffered under the male gaze as well as the colonial gaze in this instance. In a postcolonial approach, Rahab's portrayal as a prostitute needs to be examined to understand the ideology of oppression present in the text and how this portrayal 'othered' her.

When introducing Rahab, the biblical author found it fit to offer an additional description that influences the reader's perception of Rahab. She is introduced as Rahab the prostitute, Rahab the broad. A prostitute or harlot by definition is someone who offers sexual favours for financial compensation. In the social hierarchy, she is an outcast, not included in the community. She is a free citizen, but a dishonoured member of her community. Rahab's portrayal as a hero is wrapped in her portrayal as a prostitute. Here, one can speculate whether this is a conceptual metaphor. The question is, why is her sexuality relevant when introducing her? Is her portrayal as a heroine dependent on her being a prostitute? What was the plan of the Israelite spies when they entered her house? Did they hope to find a place where they could easily gather information about the breaches in the Canaanite's military defence during pillow talk after sleeping with Rahab? This section will engage in an analysis of the portrayal of Rahab as a prostitute with intent to uncover its relevance to the narratives in Joshua 2 and 6.

Following a postcolonial reading, the introduction of Rahab as a prostitute is an immediate claim on her sexuality. McKinlay explains that,

> They intrude not so much the view of the land, as to the view the woman of the land. And, indeed, if the taking of the land seems immediately to be by way of the taking of woman, the description, or explanation of Rahab as *zona* further underlines this. Rahab is introduced as first as a *zona*, and secondly, as one whose name is Rahab,

> the 'broad', a name which allows a double entendre that spans the languages (McKinlay, 2008:37).

McKinlay's view shows an interconnectedness between the land and the sexuality of Rahab. In a postcolonial reading, we need to acknowledge that Rahab's sexuality is connected to the taking of the land and vice versa. In the quest for the land, her sexuality is seen as a commodity to be owned by the Israelites. It can be argued that not only her sexuality was a commodity in the process of colonisation but also her identity as a Canaanite.

Rahab's introduction as *zona* or the broad is emphasised, and it shows that her loyalty to the adversary can be bought. She is a vulnerable woman to be saved and moralised by the Israelites. Moreover, this introduction or the relevance of her being introduced as a prostitute relates to the Hebrew Bible's explicit use of sexualised body metaphors to describe the disobedience of Yahweh's people. Thus, Rahab presents a metaphorical openness and fertility of the land. Dube (2000:121) argues that, "Rahab's body is also open to the taking by foreign men, whose power includes taking possession of her permanently, destroying her native compatriots and possessing her land." Her introduction as a prostitute is indeed a gendered metaphor representing what the land could be—open and willing to be colonised. Rahab is the naïve native woman in need of rescuing from her environment. Her being at the outskirts of her social location left her vulnerable, and at the exact point of colonisation, the contact zone.

4.6 Rahab as Harlot Needed for Israelite Ideology

The image of Rahab as a prostitute bears negative connotations, of one who engages in sexual immorality, disloyalty, and ungodliness. However, what is interesting is that the biblical author uses words like *hesed* and *emet* (loving-kindness and trustworthiness) when the spies describe her behaviour towards them. This, in essence, conveys ambivalent elements in this portrayal of Rahab as *zona*. Is she only kind and trustworthy when she encounters the Israelites because they pray to the superior God? If Rahab did not acknowledge their God as superior, would they still be considered as kind and trustworthy?

It should also be noted that Rahab's portrayal as a prostitute is vital because it fits the conquest strategies of the Israelites. Bird contends that "the entire Israelite conquest

account depends on Rahab's marginal status, both in society Canaanite and Israelite society" (Bird, 1997:213). The Israelites gained access to her because of her marginal status as a social outcast. Given the ancient context, no honourable woman would have allowed strange men to enter her home and stay there. As such presenting her as a prostitute made logical sense to the author otherwise it would seem that the Israelite spies used force to enter her house and forced Rahab not to reveal where they were hiding. The perception is that of one with a low moral compass, as such, not much is expected from this woman, who has a reputation of preying on men's weaknesses. This is a clear indication that the writer uses the biblical characters as puppets to convey a specific message to and persuade the audience. Introducing Rahab as a prostitute is important because it advances Israelite ideology. She is bold and wilful; so bold that she disregards the command of the 'unrighteous' King of Jericho, yet she cannot deny the superiority of the Israelite God. Her career in prostitution benefits the Israelites, as it shows the power of Yahweh which could transform even a prostitute from her wicked ways to a loyal and kind servant of Yahweh. The spies also are the first to break the negative connotation that being a harlot conveyed. Rahab's profession as a harlot is accepted with unease and sanitised by Israelite ideology. Thus, the portrayal or reactions of disgust are dissolved.

4.7 Rahab a Colonised Woman

Rahab's portrayal in the biblical narrative of Joshua 2 and 6 emphasises the various layers of oppression that the bodies of colonised women experienced under the forces of colonisation. The Joshua narrative also highlights the dangers of unrecognised imperial strategies in the biblical canon. Rahab did not recognise the imperialistic strategies, and these strategies could easily also go unnoticed by readers of the Joshua narrative. This section sets out to highlight the imperialistic strategies and patterns present in Joshua 2 and 6 in the portrayal of Rahab.

4.7.1 Imperialist Rhetoric

Recognising the imperialistic patterns and strategies in this narrative is important in the quest to reclaim the character and portrayal of women in imperialising narratives. The imperialistic agenda and strategies present in the text contain specific rhetoric, which should be "recognized as a literary type scene of land possession in the rhetoric of God, gold, glory and gender" (Dube, 2000:76). This rhetoric is not too difficult to

recognise, for, in the colonial intent, land is usually presented as a gendered metaphor, as a woman. Usually, the chronology in imperialising narratives starts with the woman encountered at the contact zone. The coloniser is intrigued, and she is won over with affection. Her character represents what her land has to offer. As such, her native land becomes a potential place of domestication by the coloniser. Rahab represents this chronological order.

The Joshua narrative opens with Joshua taking over as leader of the Israelites after the death of Moses. His first instruction is to send the spies to scout the 'promised' land of Jericho. The spies then only enter the house of Rahab, and after spending the night there, they do not scout the land any further. They knew what the land had to offer as Rahab represented the potential fertility of the Promised Land, Canaan. Rahab the welcoming native openly proclaims the superiority of the Israelite God and the Deuteronomistic theology. She represents the potential the land has to offer which means that they have completed their scouting task, and their mission is accomplished.

The imperialising chronology is clear—the Israelites meet Rahab at the contact zone. She is won over with affection and she commits to their way of life, proclaiming the superiority of the colonisers and their God. Her mind is colonised. Moreover, she is portrayed as a prostitute and this conveys an immoral picture of Rahab. It describes and connotes her insufficiency and inferiority in the eyes of the Israelites. They are her saviour when invading her native land. She is spared but more importantly, she is sanitised and tamed, saved from her immoral way of life as a Canaanite.

4.7.2 Othering

Rahab is portrayed as one who without a doubt or proper consideration betrays her people. She is fully convinced about the superiority of her coloniser and she has complete faith in their capability to destroy her people. Therefore, she is baptised in Israelite ideology and Deuteronomistic theology, and she becomes complicit in the annihilation of her own people. Dube describes this imperial strategy as follows: "Rahab's voice is notably one with the coloniser's pen, she is a mouthpiece of their agendas. The coloniser's ideal dream is that the colonised will proclaim the coloniser's superiority pledge absolute loyalty and surrender all their rights voluntarily" (Dube,

2000:78). In postcolonial feminist intent, it is clear that Rahab is a colonised woman, but she does not know that. Rahab is bleeding without realising she has been cut.

Further, Rahab's portrayal as a prostitute is an embedded colonial strategy of othering. Prostitution is a prominent metaphor or portrayal of othering in the Hebrew texts, portraying the religious polytheism of the 'other,' portraying the immorality and need for salvation of the other by Yahweh. Othering ensures the colonial rhetoric of insider and outsider, the superiority of the coloniser, and the inferiority of the outsider. The ultimate goal of colonisation is to not only gain full domination and ownership of the land but also control its resources and the native's mind. Through the Israelite ideology and Deuteronomistic theology, Rahab is captured. The colonisers control her land and her body Rahab, as she embodies their interests and the ultimate colonising goal. Her mind is colonised, and that is the most potent form of colonisation. She echoes the coloniser's ideology, which is that before the Israelites even set foot into Jericho, they already have won the battle. Dube (2000:79) argues that Rahab died with her people; she was reborn for her colonisers when her land was conquered. Not only did her people die; her heritage, culture and language died with them. She became the literary construction of the coloniser's pen. She may have been alive or survived the Israelite conquest physically, culturally, and politically she was deceased.

By othering Rahab's character, she is made to represent the coloniser's desires. She adopts their religious beliefs, they gain access to the resources of her native land, and they are glorified throughout scriptural history. They gain God, gold, and glory. Rahab bleeds without realising she was cut.

4.8 Rahab in Conversation with Pocahontas

Generally, one would argue that Rahab and Pocahontas are worlds apart and have nothing in common for the one is a biblical account of the Israelite's Promised Land and the other a Disney love account. In postcolonial intent, this could not be farther from the truth, as these two narratives have much more in common than one would believe. The two women in the two stories were victims of colonised constructions that benefitted their colonisers. Rowlett (2000) applies a postcolonial approach to critique the portrayals of Rahab and Pocahontas by way of analogy. Building on her work, this section focuses on the colonial strategies present in the account of Rahab as well as

in the account of Pocahontas. Both women were victims of symbolic violence, of the construction of the coloniser's desires.

Bringing Rahab into conversation with Pocahontas through a postcolonial reading optic exposes the imperial and patriarchal ideologies present in their stories. These two women have been used as gendered metaphors in accounts of conquest. Both Rahab and Pocahontas are portrayed as the ‘good natives’ who instantly accept the superiority and dominance of their colonisers. Contrary to various general colonial quests in which the women at the contact zone, the native women, are portrayed as helpless needy women to be saved by the coloniser, these two women are portrayed strangely, as the protectors and the saviour of the foreign men. They protect them from their own people and in this way, volunteer themselves and their land to be colonised.

The depiction of a saviour moving into volunteer to be colonised is embedded in the ideological perspectives of othering. Women or feminised portrayals of conquest are very prominent in the process of colonisation. These characters were perceived and portrayed as good natives who passively welcome the benefit of colonialism, which is civilisation, as well as being controlled by the men of the colonising party. They welcome the imperial forces in their complicity to eradicate their people. Rahab saved the Israelites and proclaimed the superiority of their God, and as a result, ensured the conquest of her own people. Pocahontas saved the English men from her own people and proclaimed her love for John Smith. She set herself on the line for the man who won her affection while he scouted her native land. Rowlett describes this as a colonial strategy:

> Both these cases are shaded by the gender polarities so often found in narratives of conquest, but also reflects the values of their respective cultural contexts: military might in the Ancient Near East and in contemporary society, a valorisation of the male-female romantic coupling pushed so emphatically in popular culture (Rowlett, 2000:69).

In the narrative of Joshua 2 and 6, as in the Disney account of Pocahontas, the contextual values and perspectives are displayed.

In Pocahontas, we clearly see what Dube describes as the effect of an important colonial strategy on the good native. The good native cries and pleads with the travelling heroes. She is charmed into submission and becomes a woman conquered through romance. In Pocahontas, the turning point is where she melodramatically

places herself on the line for the life of her ‘love,’ the two opposite camps marching in song towards each other—the one camp in the quest to ensure their livelihood, their survival, and the other, in the quest to colonise the native land of Pocahontas. Pocahontas then pleads with both opposing camps to seize the opportunity to co-exist because it is possible. She openly declares her love for John Smith and appeals to her people not to go forward with their plan of war. Rowlett contends that this melodramatic scene was not part of the diaries of John Smith. Rather, the Disney writers found it fit to include it in their effort to construct the character of Pocahontas as the good native. They were focused more on the supposed love story between the coloniser and the colonised for it desensitises the cruelty of colonialism. This melodramatic articulation of a love story favours the coloniser. It strokes the ego of John Smith rather than convey an accurate historical portrayal of Pocahontas.

Similarly, Rowlett recognises the same egoistic benefit of the coloniser in the Rahab account. Rahab’s portrayal may have been the desired construction of the ego of the Israelite spies. A prostitute found them irresistible enough to sacrifice her people, surrendering her body, her land, and her culture for theirs. This to Rowlett is a construction of male-desire. In these two accounts, there is no proper consideration of the embedded conflicts of imperialism and patriarchy. It is misrepresented and manipulated to fit the coloniser’s rhetoric of superiority and domination.

Moreover, the irony of inclusiveness from the coloniser should be noted. First, the portrayal of these two women’s agency to submit voluntarily and convert to the coloniser’s way is pivotal, for it sanctifies the coloniser from coercing the women into adopting the cultures of the coloniser. The colonisers then are seen as inclusive for they create a space where the ‘other’ becomes a part of their lives. The prostitute Rahab is saved and welcomed by the colonisers despite her previous immoral way of life.

In the case of Pocahontas, the English men are willing to live in peace with the Native Americans, demonstrating the wonder of love and the peace that accompanies this romantic love. In the irony of inclusiveness, the colonisers believe that they are working towards inclusion. Pocahontas and Rahab then are portrayed as the good natives with insight and wisdom regarding what their land could be. The potential inclusiveness is conditioned by submission to the superiority of the coloniser. Rahab was ‘included’ in the promises of Yahweh to the chosen people. She later married an

Israelite and was part of the Israelite community, and no longer an outcast. Pocahontas also managed to marry an English man, even though it was not John Smith. She was also included in her new community. This is the irony of inclusion; the colonisers believe that they prioritise inclusion and civilisation.

Considering the portrayal of inclusion of both Rahab and Pocahontas, the question is, were they included or were they constructions of a supposed inclusion, a construction that ensured insider and outsider ways of othering? Were they simply not controlled beings brought into communities of othering? Rowlett (2000:72) examines this notion as she asks whether inclusion included being controlled. This act of control in imperial narratives takes place in two ways—through abolition and domestication. An abolition is a form of eradication, and total eradication takes away the power of the coloniser for, without objects to dominate, the coloniser possesses no power. The other form of control is the alternative to eradicate all objects of domination; it takes it form in domestication. The coloniser controls the fate of a group of people yet has control over the surviving objects, thus, ensuring that the exercise of power remains in place.

Domestication is a more lethal form of control, the dangers of which we find in the narrative of Rahab as in the narrative of Pocahontas. Domestication conveys the coloniser's attempt to civilise the colonised other, colonising their minds so that the colonising object adopts and sustains the coloniser's culture and way of life. In this process, voluntary submission is emphasised, and it presents a picture of the good native having agency and control, not at all coerced. Thus, the good natives are complicit in their domestication. Their eagerness and voluntary submission to the colonial powers present a form of conversion of these women, a turning point in their lives.

4.9 Beyond the Text

One prevalent thing that we should be mindful of is the power dynamics at play within the biblical narrative of Joshua 2 and 6. Musa Dube points out that postcolonial feminist interpretation shows that this Rahab narrative has deeply embedded power dynamics that should be considered before reaching conclusions about the text. We should be mindful at all times that interpretation is very much dependent on the interpretive community. Reading this ancient Israelite narrative is complex, and we will always remain outsiders looking into the text in our quest to make sense of the world.

The question is how do we, or how do I as a South African coloured woman, read Rahab in this tale? Exploring the alternative is an act of resistance, a postcolonial feminist strategy of resistance. Resistance is merely theoretical if it does not provide an alternative. Thus, my resistance has attempted to flow into praxis, as I offer an alternative.

4.10 Rahab and a Postcolonial Alternative

Exploring the alternative within imperial rhetoric is the heart of my scholarship, as a student of postcolonial feminist interpretation. Exploring an alternative and liberating perspective to Rahab's actions is a decolonising process. McKinlay asks whether we should see Rahab as a heroine, a traitor or a victim in the narrative of Joshua 2 and 6. Exploring various possibilities and examining the text beyond the text implies that we need to acknowledge the possibility that Rahab's positionality made her an easy target of manipulation and exploitation. The Israelites already targeted this vulnerability as they entered her house. Rahab was a woman of marginal status at the contact zone. This is a working colonial strategy that produces many fruits in various colonial quests. Rahab was a victim of this colonising strategy. As such, in seeking an alternative, Rahab's reading prism is helpful to deconstruct the derogative portrayals of Rahab. Rahab serves as an alarming reminder of the multiple layers of oppression wrapped in imperial narratives. Rahab's reading prism exposes these embedded layers of oppression specifically in the biblical texts. Rahab's body was used as the battlefield of patriarchy and imperialism. In the above portrayals, we are exposed to the overlapping domination of patriarchy and imperialism. As such, Rahab's reading prism avails us with reading tools to deconstruct the oppressive portrayals of women which are created to benefit imperial powers.

In the portrayal of Rahab, Rahab's reading prism enables our reading optics to recognise that Rahab was a victim, who suffered under the coloniser's pen, and was written 'down' in history. 'Written down' here refers to how Rahab's story has been written in disgust though her actions served the purposes of the coloniser, and she was tolerated because she adopted the coloniser's superior ideology. Her sexuality is considered a commodity to be owned by the coloniser. Rahab's reading prism explores and prioritises alternative realities and possibilities, emphasising the normative truths that the story possesses. These liberating truths give life and speak

against the obliteration and abuse of the bodies of women at the contact zones and of women who suffer under the coloniser's pen in imperial narratives. Applying Rahab's reading prism from my positionality, I shall examine, in the following section, alternative portrayals or deconstruction of the portrayals discussed above, which are emphasised as normative and embodied truth.

4.10.1 Rahab as Heroine

Rahab, the heroine, has been celebrated unanimously throughout canonical history. It is established that this positive image of Rahab is determined by the interpretative community, placing emphasis on who benefits from the portrayal of the heroine. McKinlay (2004:47) explains that Rahab as heroine is an Israelite construction that benefited their identity as the chosen people of God. She is an instrument in the text which represents a pivotal tract of her people's land. Therefore, she contributes greatly to the semiotic economy of Israel. This is the creation and portrayal of Rahab as heroine, a portrayal of heroism and othering, one formed to impart an identity to the 'us' of Israel.

This construction is dangerous. Portraying Rahab as a heroine is dangerous, in particular, to the modern reader. It is dangerous because imperial and patriarchal ideologies are embedded in this narrative account and being ignorant of the invisibility of these powers and ideologies in the text shapes perspectives and parts of the lives of the biblical readers. Rahab's portrayal as a heroine poses the danger of perpetuating oppressive ideologies in dominant cultures and colonial quests. It forces the oppressed into submission to the dominating powers. As discussed previously in this chapter, the book of Joshua is embedded in the rhetoric of violence (Rowlett, 1992:183), and imperialistic rhetoric (Dube, 2000:76). The worldview of the superiority of the coloniser is also internalised and perpetuated in modern society. In my perspective and social location, the danger of portraying Rahab as heroine has already taken shape and it has been used as justification for the superiority of the coloniser. Reading Rahab as heroine should not be considered helpful; rather it should be undermined. The portrayal of Rahab as heroine captures the dangers of violence—of symbolic violence and physical violence against the most vulnerable.

Rahab was not a heroine but a victim of imperial and patriarchal powers. McKinlay (2000) claims that Rahab was a victim of symbolic violence; she was bleeding without

realising she has been cut. If Rahab is considered a heroine, then the readers need to readjust their reading optic, because their perspective perpetuates symbolic violence.

4.10.2 Rahab as Trickster

To see Rahab as a trickster, it is important to realise that she did not save the entire Israelite community but saved only two men. She did not communicate or share any important information about her native land or their military strategies. She did not tell them which entrances, or people are more vulnerable to attack. She merely concealed the whole truth about the two spies from the king's men.

She used the spies as collateral in case the Israelites succeeded in conquering her native land. McKinlay questions whether Rahab indeed could have known that the Israelites would succeed in conquering her people. She argues that there is no way Rahab could have been sure that they would succeed. How could a woman of her marginal status have had the circumstantial evidence on which to base such a decision? This was clearly a gamble Rahab took. Either way, she and her family would be protected. Rahab indeed exercised power and agency in the narrative, but this agency is limited. She was in a position of vulnerability, and this was exploited by the Israelites. She was the woman at the contact zone, a female member of a community on the verge of ridicule and destruction. McKinlay (2004:43) claims that "Rahab's power surely appears to be as the power of the last gasp, of the desperate underside, told over generations of Israel with the outcome known already, there is no question: the power is Israel's". Based on my decolonising reading optic, Rahab must have had to weigh her options, choosing between life and possible death. Her decision was to use the Israelites as insurance, as collateral for the survival of herself and her family. She did what she had to do, even if that meant supporting Deuteronomistic theology and using it to her advantage as the spies had used her vulnerability to their advantage. Hers should be seen as a desperate attempt to ensure the survival of her family. Rahab's trickster trait, Runions (2011:69) argues, was a survival instinct.

4.10.3 Rahab as Traitor

In the quest to make sense of Rahab's action as a traitor of her people in the biblical text, we need to look beyond the text to find liberating understandings of Rahab's decision to hide the spies instead of doing what she was commanded to do by her

king. We need to consider an alternative motivation for her actions, which many interpreters have perceived as self-centred and self-serving. However, they fail to understand that her decision to hide the spies could have been an act of resistance or an act of endured trauma. Rahab was living on the periphery of the town as a social outcast, rejected by her own people, probably because of her social status as a prostitute. The people probably did not consider her a part of their community or one of their own. Why then would she be loyal to people who disregarded her humanity? Her decision may have been influenced by her experience as a social outcast. She weighed her options and decided that being a 'helpful' foreigner who would receive favour could be better than remaining a social outcast in her native land. Rowlett captures this as part of the rhetoric of violence in the book of Joshua:

> The book of Joshua reflects a positive attempt to win the voluntary loyalty of the people by making them feel part of a collective unity. By appealing to their sense of belonging the text is building their identity as a unified people endowed with a purpose (Rowlett, 1996:13).

Rahab submitted to the colonisers in her vulnerable state of exclusion, and because she had heard about the Israel God, she knew also that the punishment for the other is death. She was caught between a rock and a hard place.

Furthermore, her response to the king's men could have been a reaction to possible previous hostile encounters with these men. In portrayals of Rahab as a traitor, these possibilities have not been considered. As such, my observation is that the above explorations make more sense than seeing Rahab merely as a good native, proclaiming Hebrew scriptural tradition which she probably had never encountered before. Rahab is not a traitor but a survivor, a woman making a way out of no way.

4.10.4 Rahab's Agency

The biblical author indicates that Rahab did not merely accept that the spies were the people who would conquer her native land and she belonged to the people who would be conquered, she controlled the situation. It is quite clear that though this scene was set in motion by Joshua, it was controlled by Rahab. Rahab is portrayed as a woman with full agency, in full control of not only her own destiny but also the destiny of her own people, and as the protector of Israelite spies. With her affirmation of the superiority of the Israelite God, she negotiated her survival and that of her family. This prostitute is cashing in on services rendered to the Israelite spies.

The portrayal of Rahab's agency is quite central to the chapters in which she features. Rahab controls the narrative; she is in control of the lives of the spies as well as the lives of her own people. This is unusual given the particular patriarchal context where the biblical texts originated. Reading beyond the text shows that Rahab's portrayal of being in control and acting without being coerced or forced to betray her people is an indication that the author was using Rahab as a scapegoat and was 'othering' her. Only the foreign other would betray her own people and adopt the ideology of the coloniser, especially since she was not forced to do so.

The so-called agency of Rahab ought to be interrogated, as her agency or exercise of some form of power fits too neatly into the Israelite ideology. From a postcolonial perspective, the idea of Rahab's agency will be re-examined and an alternative perspective about this agency will be considered. It is indeed suspicious that Rahab's portrayals fit too well into the Israelite ideology—a Canaanite woman miraculously proclaims a scriptural tradition which was highly unlikely that she had encountered before. McKinlay contends that we should consider carefully whether we have heard of a woman schooled in Hebrew scriptural tradition. She argues that "From Israel's perspective Rahab's words, coming from the mouth of a Canaanite, would not only be crucially affirming but they would also seem miraculous and witness both to their God's power and particular care for Israel" (McKinlay, 2004:45). As noted earlier, the ancient biblical texts were written in a patriarchal context and for a patriarchal context, and they reflect the ideologies of the authors. As such, we need to ask whether these words were not put into Rahab's mouth by the authors of the text or the Deuteronomistic redactors.

Rahab's agency, in my view, is a conceptual metaphor used to support Israelite ideology. Her agency is used to manipulate the reader into believing that Rahab was transformed and saved by the Israelite Yahweh and that she chose this salvation soberly because she had been enlightened about Israel's way of life. Her choosing to save the Israelites implies literally and figuratively that she had chosen 'life.' She is portrayed as a winner. The alternative interpretation we need to acknowledge here is that Rahab outsmarted the Israelites who believed they were in control of the narrative because Rahab indeed was in control of the narrative. She had to outsmart the men and reconstruct the colonising idea of control in order to survive. We need to acknowledge that Rahab was a victim of colonising powers, exploited by her

vulnerable positionality. Rahab was a woman at the centre of a patriarchal context who needed to make sense of the power dynamics and complexities at work in order to survive. She was a victim of patriarchal imperialist power dynamics, who suffered under the symbolic violence of her time. The rhetoric of violence in the text may suggest that Rahab had agency, but that agency is merely a literary construction by the author and redactors in order to scapegoat her and show her complicity in the annihilation of her people. Her agency is linked to her being a scapegoat.

4.10.5 Comedic resistance in the Rahab narrative

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the humour in the Rahab narrative is a form of subverting the power narrative and structure that are present in the texts of Joshua 2 and 6. The humour falls on the men in this narrative, subverting the power structure. Melissa Jackson regards the men as feeble male characters. Although the author's objective in the portrayal of Rahab was to utilise her as a literary construction to fit the theme of the book, to fit a Deuteronomistic theology, he does not realise the comedic and subversive portrayal of the male characters. Despite his patriarchal and gendered undermining portrayal of Rahab, Rahab is in control of the narrative. Decolonising her portrayal as heroine and salvation figure, Rahab should be celebrated for making a way out of no way, for subverting the power structures, and for making fools out of those who think they are superior and in control.

The humour is that the author with great effort portrays Rahab as inadequate, not competent enough to be part of the Israelite community without the salvation of Yahweh. However, the Israelite spies, who were supposedly sent by the divine, and who already enjoyed the salvation of Yahweh are the incompetent and inadequate people, and not Rahab the Canaanite prostitute. Thus, the literary meaning of the Rahab narrative as a spy narrative is indeed comedic.

Another form of subversion in the Rahab narrative, one which subverts the colonising strategies, is that Rahab is one of the only two characters to be named in Joshua, not in relation to her husband or her family origin. Reading Rahab's story as a comedy requires sanctified imagination. Wilda Gafney explains that "sanctified imagination" is a term taken from black preaching (Gafney, 2017:3). She builds on the work of previous scholars who suggested that sanctified imagination is a form of reader-response criticism. Sanctified imagination is one of the golden frameworks which

womanist scholars use to bring characters' voices to life, to reimagine the patriarchal umbrella they have been forced under, to question and imagine that there must be more to stories than their surface interpretation (Gafney 2017). Naming Rahab subverts the power structure in the narrative, as she becomes the dominant figure in Joshua 2. She is named while neither the so-called superior spies nor the kings' men are.

Furthermore, after Rahab acknowledged the superiority of Yahweh, the spies returned to Joshua with Rahab's instruction, which means that the power structure is turned upside down. The spies went back parroting exactly what Rahab had told them (Jackson, 2012:87). This indeed portrays a picture of mimicry. Sugirtharajah (2006:15) notes that mimicry is a response of the colonised to the colonisers, becoming like them yet different. He captures Homi Bhabha's understanding of mimicry which states that "mimicry were strategies forged by the colonised as ways of responding to colonial rule (Sugirtharajah, 2006:15). Mimicry in postcolonial criticism is identified as a tool for survival in oppressive situations. The oppressed mimics the oppressor as a comedic response to the power of the oppressor. To the oppressed, mimicry is a form of resistance and of deconstructing the power of the colonised; yet, this is the intended goal of the colonisers —for the colonised to mimic their ways of being. Rahab indeed engaged in mimicking the coloniser, and used that to her advantage, as a form of survival.

The Joshua narrative as a whole is embedded in the binaries of 'us and them'—the chosen people of Yahweh against the wicked people rejected by Yahweh. Rahab is at the heart of both narratives in Joshua 2 and 6. She is part of the wicked Canaanite community which God rejects while she becomes one of the chosen ones by betraying her own. Viewing Rahab as the other indicates certain comic elements. As Jackson (2012:95) states, "Comedy permits us to laugh at these inverted situations." In addition, comedy is used as survival and coping strategy. However, feminist critique shows that comedy, specifically as hegemonic strategy, does more harm than good because one only laughs at a joke you understand. Given the above discussion and depending on the perspective and the interpretive community, Rahab the other, as a joke, is disputed. Beyond everything, Rahab has subverted the power structures; she has prioritised survival.

4.11 Rahab, a Queer Figure?

Queer studies have become a well-established interdisciplinary discourse that challenges the definitions and dysfunctions that shape and construct sexuality and gender discourses. As a discipline, “It focuses on critically analysing the various intersections of sexual dynamics with other dynamics of race class, nation and culture” (Hornsby & Stone, 2011: ix). Engaging with queer studies helps my decolonising reading optic of Rahab. Recognising Rahab as a queer figure in the Hebrew Bible is a pivotal decolonising strategy, used to deconstruct the hegemonic imperial and patriarchal portrayals of her character.

Rahab is indeed a queer figure in the Hebrew Bible; she stands out like a sore thumb in the book of Joshua. Her character is smeared with immorality and disgust. She troubles the Israelite ideology of heteronormativity and the Holy Land (Runions, 2011:57). Rahab is not a normative character. She could not be understood because she does not fit the Israelite binaries. She has no husband, she is a free citizen in her country (even if it is on the outskirts of the land), she is independent, and she has a house of her own. She can clearly look after herself. She is no damsel in distress who needs a man to protect her. Rather, she queers the narrative as she protects and rescues the Israelite spies. This is not something a woman, let alone a prostitute (with no sense of loyalty), and a foreigner does.

Runions (2011:57) observes that in the Joshua narrative, Rahab is clearly stereotyped racially as not conforming to the hetero-patriarchal norms, as is typical of the biblical and postbiblical treatment of the Canaanites. The Israelites branded the Canaanites as sexually immoral beings which the Holy Land would vomit through divine intervention. From the beginning, they perceived the Canaanites' sexuality to be non-heteronormative. Fewell (1992:72) builds on this argument, as she contends that the Israelite perspective of foreigners was wrapped in disgust and focused on sexual immorality. Rahab’s sexuality was a pivotal point of reference by the author of Joshua who also presented the greater theme of sacred identity and Holy War in the book of Joshua. Her sexuality stands out as non-heteronormative and ungodly, yet it is highlighted by the author and redactors of Joshua.

As already mentioned, Rahab is needed to be a prostitute. Her sexuality is highlighted to fit the Israelite perspective and ideology of otherness which is sexualised and

disgust to foreigners. Strengthening the insider-outsider boundaries, Fewell contends that, “Israel’s problem with foreigners has a decidedly sexualised dimension. Foreign women are targeted as the problem easily seducing Israelite men into worshipping other gods” (Fewell, 1992:72). This perspective is embodied in the Rahab narrative, as she embodies the Israelite ideology of otherness as well as the outsider and insider. Being a foreigner (in her own land), a harlot, and above all, a woman, Rahab, as a queer figure, could not be understood, but because she was needed, she had to be sanitised and transformed. Rahab’s difference and queerness are needed to affirm Israelite ideology.

Marcella Althaus-Reid sees a transformative queer God in the Rahab narrative. Rereading Rahab through a postcolonial lens is indeed a transforming queer discourse. Althaus-Reid (2007:131) sees a God who “disenfranchises Godself from the presence of colonial patronage.” Rahab who survives the conquering of the land conveys the picture of a God who does not take part in the gruesome acts of colonisation. Althaus-Reid also argues that as we reconstruct and reread through a postcolonial lens, we expose imperial hetero-patriarchal strategies in the biblical text. God is disfranchised from colonialism.

Moreover, Althaus-Reid (2012:132) reads the Rahab narrative in terms of the category of bisexuality. Even though not making any specific judgments regarding Rahab’s sexuality, Althaus-Reid argues that Rahab can be said to be queer, reminiscent of the notion of bisexuality in her response. The reason for this, according to Althaus-Reid, is that Rahab did not commit to a heterosexual mono-loving ideology of one nation, one God, one faith. Rather, she explored the God of the Israelites and remained in her Canaanite worship culture. This queer perspective is a bisexual praxis, and it liberates Rahab from her portrayal as a traitor and accomplice in the eradication of her people. She rightfully exercises sexual freedom, not choosing or submitting to the Israelite God but exploring her options. Thus, we cannot conclude that Rahab betrayed her people and sided with the Israelites.

Clearly, there has been a forced portrayal and interpretation of heteronormativity in the analysis of the character of Rahab. However, she is anything but heteronormative in essence. She does not fit the sexual, racial, cultural, religious binary of any nation, either her own or the Israelite nation. Althaus-Reid argues firmly that we Rahab should

be dislocated from any heteronormative, hetero-patriarchal, and imperial portrayals or interpretations.

4.12 Conclusion of Chapter

The portrayal of Rahab has been a nuanced and varied one. This chapter has focused on the various portrayals of Rahab as heroine, traitor, and victim. In sum, the storytellers of the Rahab narrative shaped sacred traditions by working with considerable care at their craft to carry particular beliefs and messages to their biblical audience at large. Indeed, this has affected and clouded the interpretations of the biblical reader. The power of the scroll has shaped the construction of Rahab as a heroine and a traitor, but decolonising these portrayals, this chapter has argued that Rahab is a victim of the coloniser's pen, a literary construction of the biblical author aimed to get the audiences to acquiesce to this portrayal of Rahab. Rahab's portrayals or the reception of her portrayals depend on the perspectives of the interpretive community. In the process of decolonising Rahab, I have considered the historical-critical methods and approaches such as source criticism, redaction criticism and form criticism in order to understand better the world behind the text of Joshua 2 and 6. Special attention was placed on the literary and redaction analysis of the Rahab narrative since the literary meaning of the text is meant to convey the sacred and complex relationship between the Israelites and Yahweh. Further, a close analysis of the socio-political context in which the Rahab narrative was shaped was carried out, and how this influenced the text in a context of violence and Holy War.

Moreover, this chapter has examined critically the introduction of Rahab as a prostitute and its significance. It shows also that the portrayal of her heroism is linked to her marginal status and portrayal as a prostitute and an outcast and was meant to promote Israelite ideology. Rahab is a literary construction of the author aimed to sanctify the Israelite spies' intentions or the Israelite community from using force, forcing the superiority of Yahweh on Rahab. Portraying her as a prostitute makes her an easier and demoralised character who would easily betray her own people because of her promiscuous lifestyle. The picture of Rahab proclaiming the superiority of Yahweh voluntarily implicates her as an accomplice and as a scapegoat in the eradication of her own people. Her portrayal as a prostitute was crucial as it substantiated the Israelite ideology of *chosenness.*

Further, a postcolonial analysis of the imperial strategies present in the depiction of Rahab as heroine, prostitute, or traitor in Joshua 2 and 6 shows Rahab as a colonised woman. The discussion stresses the dangers of imperial strategies by analysing the imperialistic rhetoric that is prevalent in imperialist narratives. The basic premise of this imperialistic rhetoric is the literary type goal of imperialism namely God, gold, and glory, all wrapped in gender subjugation.

Additionally, in this chapter, Rahab is brought into conversation with Pocahontas. The aim is to show how these two accounts of conquest and the portrayal of the two women promote the coloniser's ideology of conquest and superiority. Both Rahab and Pocahontas respectively are literary constructions of the biblical author and of the Disney film director.

Lastly, by using the postcolonial lens to deconstruct the portrayals of Rahab, an alternative interpretation of Rahab as a queer figure developed. Rahab's is a forced portrayal and interpretation of heteronormativity because the character is anything but heteronormative. Ignoring Rahab as a queer figure who practised a bisexual in terms of sexuality and religion has resulted in her portrayal as a traitor and an accomplice in the eradication of her people. This suggests that Rahab's character and portrayal are a literary construction of the biblical author. Rahab suffered under the pen of the coloniser, which aimed to assert power and define Israelite identity. This reading optic has helped in decolonising and deconstructing the derogative portrayals of Rahab. Rahab was neither a heroine nor a traitor of her people but the victim of the coloniser's pen.

CHAPTER 5

5. KROTOA

"*Why are you so blind to what the Dutch can offer us, they won't harm us if we share the land with them. The land does not belong to us, but we belong to the land. Why can our people not see this?"* (Durant, 2017).

In the previous chapter, the character of Krotoa was analysed through a postcolonial reading optic. This chapter sets out to discuss the historicity of Krotoa, primarily focusing on the character portrayal of Krotoa in the 2017 movie *Krotoa,* which was directed by Roberta Durand. The methodology suggested in chapters 2 and 3 will be employed in this chapter to examine the movie *Krotoa* and to identify the colonising strategies in the movie. This award-winning movie has generated mixed reactions, debates, and feelings from different audiences. In this chapter, I will employ my own visual interpretation of the movie *Krotoa* to analyse and illustrate the colonising strategies present in this film. My argument is that the 2017 movie *Krotoa* contains various colonial strategies, which will be discussed by way of analogy.

It is evident that the sources available to write an accurate account of Krotoa's life story are limited. Krotoa the intelligent woman who easily learned foreign languages did not write down her own story and all that we have to go on are the written sources from her colonisers' diaries. Recognising the limited sources available and not focusing on a historiographical account to portray accurately Krotoa's life trajectory, the focus of this study is on the colonising strategies and specifically the interpretative portrayals of her. From my decolonial feminist position, my goal is to question and investigate the colonial ideology re-inscribed by cultural appropriations in the film that supposedly narrated Krotoa's life story. As such, a brief historical account will be presented.

However, I do recognise my limitations and liminalities when interpreting Krotoa as a theologian, who is not a historian. My visual interpretation may not be objective and from my postcolonial feminist position, I embrace and embody this reality. I, therefore, engage with this film from my positionality as a politically designated black and culturally defined 'coloured' woman, who is a descendant of the Khoi Goringhaichona

princess. I am committed to reading against the grain, using a postcolonial feminist optic to make sense of the portrayals of Krotoa, and to show the dangers these reception histories pose because they further imperialist understandings of a post-apartheid South Africa. Since I am employing a postcolonial feminist reading optic, I am inclined not to refer to Krotoa as Eva throughout this study. Even though various scholars including Yvette Abrahams refer to the name given to her by her colonisers, I will refrain from doing so.

Within the brief sections about the historicity of Krotoa in this chapter, many references will be made to the works of Yvette Abrahams, specifically to her article, “Was Eva Raped? An Exercise in Speculative History” (1996). Abrahams has written about Krotoa based on available historical accounts in a quest to decolonise the understandings and assumptions about Krotoa’s life. Therefore, the review of historical accounts in this chapter will rely mainly on her findings and portrayal of Krotoa in conversation with the works of other scholars like V.C Malherbe’s *Eva a Woman between* (1990), Pieter Conradie’s “Remembering Eva: The Frontiers Within” (1997), and “The Story of Eva (Krotoa): Translation Transgressed” (1998). Among others also, I shall consider the writings of Christina Landman who has analysed Krotoa from a theological perspective in her articles, “The (Ir)religious Krotoa” (1996), and “Christian Piety” (1998) where she connects Krotoa to biblical characters such as Eve and Mary Magdalene. Lastly, the 2017 film *Krotoa* will be discussed broadly in conversation with other scholars to identify the colonising strategies present in the film.

5.1 Krotoa (Eva) Written ‘down’ in Historiography

Krotoa is the mother of the South African nation, the first woman to experience colonialism in Southern Africa, the first Christian of colour in South Africa. Krotoa is referred to as the ‘first woman’ because her Khoi compatriots, thousands of Khoi women, later also experienced colonialism (Abrahams, 1996:3). It has been argued that Krotoa, renamed as Eva by the Dutch, is the most written about woman in South African history, yet the written sources about her remain limited. Julia Wells in her article, “Eva’s Men: Gender and Power” (1998), cites Carlie Coetzee and notes that, “Carli Coetzee demonstrates how recent Afrikaans-speaking artists, poets and actors have constructed an image of Eva as the mother of the Afrikaner nation, a tamed African who acquiesced to Europeanness” (Wells, 1998:417-418). Krotoa is seen as

the mother of the nation because of her views about co-existence and racial diversity. As such, I will argue that as Rahab was seen as a paradigm of faith by the Israelites, so should Krotoa be seen as a paradigm for the so-called rainbow nation. Krotoa was the first native that was baptised as a Christian in the Cape Good Hope; hence, she is regarded as the original ancestor of the native Christians in South Africa. In this regard, Peter Conradie writes:

> The Dutch obviously welcomed the possibility of acculturation displayed by Eva. The name Eva in itself evokes memories of immemorial bliss and untarnished beauty. Eva became the first real engagement of the Dutch with this country and their naivety and sense for romantic adventure are to be found in the conquest of the people, especially the woman (Conradie, 1997:60).

As inscribed in the diaries of Jan van Riebeeck and the writings of historiographers, with the arrival of the Dutch in 1652, a 'refreshment' station was founded by Jan van Riebeeck for the Dutch East Indian Company at the Cape of Good Hope. After negotiations and interactions with the indigenous people, the Khoi people, Jan van Riebeeck 'took' into his house a young Khoi girl named Krotoa. From the writings of V.C Malherbe and Pieter Conradie (1997), we know that at the age of eleven years Krotoa was separated from her people and taken into the house of Jan van Riebeeck as a servant girl. Krotoa the native Khoi girl had relatives and family in the inland; her uncles were great figures in the Chainouqua and the Goringhaicona tribe. Her relative or sister was married to the chief of the Cochoqua, and most likely her mother was present amongst the former tribes. This Khoi girl was first written about in Jan van Riebeeck's journal in the year 1654. Krotoa supposedly came to the fort to assist Van Riebeeck's wife who just gave birth to a baby.

True to the colonial nature, Krotoa was renamed 'Eva' by Van Riebeeck. Conradie (1998:56) writes that "She was renamed Eva, undoubtedly an appropriation of the indigenous woman in which the adopted Christian name masks the conquest." The records show that Krotoa worked as a servant in the household of Jan van Riebeeck. She features in his journal writing of 1656, which notes her impeccable ability to learn foreign languages like Dutch and even Portuguese, and because of instances when cattle went missing, she was then 'promoted' to act as translator and negotiator between the Khoi and the Dutch people. Krotoa was baptised as Eva, the first Christian of colour in the Cape. Not only did she learn foreign languages, but she was also taught the Bible during her stay at the fort. Van Riebeeck was very 'impressed' with

this Khoi girl's ability to learn a new language and speak fluently. Not only was he impressed with her ability to speak Dutch and Portuguese but also her ability to adapt and move between the two cultures. Conradie notes that:

> Van Riebeeck was highly impressed with the process of Eva's acculturation - especially with her purported conversion to Christianity. He occasionally made reference to her leaving behind her "Indian clothing" and changing into skin clothing when visiting her relatives inland. The amazement displayed in Van Riebeeck's Journal about Eva's habitual change of dress reflects his inability to comprehend customs different from his own (Conradie, 1998:56).

Van Riebeeck also alluded to the Khoi tribe as people who lived off the land, belonged to the land and survived on what the land had to offer, that is, whatever food was available to them. In many cases, the Dutch commander referred to their customs and ways of worshipping as ludicrous and said that they "were irredeemable savages" (Wells, 1998:417). Through the colonial gaze, the Khoi tribe as a collective were seen as scavengers and were labelled as dangerous by the Dutch who did not understand their ways of living. This, in essence, is an example of the colonial gaze. Van Riebeeck's writing is indeed an example of the coloniser's pen and of how colonisers gaze at the people from the dark land and at their strange and uncivilised way of living. Compartmentalising the Khoi tribe as less than civilised, less than human, was a normal part of the colonising strategy of depriving them of their human dignity and human rights. There is no doubt that these strategies worked.

As a result of the misunderstandings of the two cultures and the negotiations between the two, an assumption of conflict was recorded which led to Krotoa being in the middle of the conflict. She was either an advocate of her people or an ally of the Dutch. Conradie notes that Krotoa's position as a translator afforded her much respect from the administrative officers in the fort. Further, "Krotoa's loyalty towards the different clans would vary as her friendship towards the Dutch did not always endear her to her people" (Conradie, 1997:60). Krotoa continued to fill the position of Jan van Riebeeck's translator which resulted in her becoming estranged from her people. However, she remained close to her sister who was married to the Chief of Cochoqua. It is reported in the journals of Van Riebeeck that she would visit her sister occasionally.

A relationship also developed between Krotoa and the Danish-Dutch surgeon and traveller Pieter van Meerhoff, for whom she bore two children. In the year 1664, two years after Van Riebeeck's departure to Batavia and the new Commander Wagenaer replaced him, Krotoa and Pieter van Meerhoff got married, with the so-called blessings

or under the pressure of the permission of the Commander and the Dutch Christian church. The following year after their marriage in 1665, Pieter van Meerhoff was promoted to superintendent of Robben Island. It was claimed that the new Commander wanted to get rid of Krotoa because she was a person of colour and a disgrace to the Dutch Indian Company, and because of the potential hostility against her from the Khoi tribes for serving as Van Riebeeck's translator and for becoming the wife of Van Meerhoff. They were therefore sent to live a solitary life on Robben Island. In 1667, Van Meerhoff was sent on an expedition in Madagascar, leaving her and the children alone on the Island. However, Van Meerhoff was killed by the residents of Madagascar, leaving Krotoa a widow and a single mother who was rejected by her people.

In the final phase of her life, she reportedly took comfort in alcohol and neglected her children. As a result, her children were separated from her. Conradie comments on this last phase of her life saying, "In 1669 Eva was reported as drinking heavily, behaving shamefully, and committing adultery. She was arrested and imprisoned on Robben Island and died five years later in 1674" (Conradie, 1998:56). The last recorded phase of Krotoa's life states that she had returned to her savage and immoral ways of being, the 'native way of being.'

From the colonial records and Conradie's account, Wells has the following to say about the final stage in Krotoa's life:

> During those years the Dutch commanders accused her of abandoning her children, of rowdy drunken behaviour, of promiscuity and producing several more children. They incarcerated her on Robben Island several times, allowing her back on promises of improved behaviour, but claimed she never reformed (Wells, 1998:436).

At the age of 32, Krotoa died alone in a jail cell, with the reputation of a drunkard and an adulterous woman. Alone. This has been the official 'recorded' story of Krotoa's life trajectory, the life story written down in history by the Dutch commander Jan van Riebeeck and the commander that succeeded him at the Cape Good Hope.

5.2 Portrayals of Krotoa in History

Krotoa, the most-written-about woman in South African historiography, has generated multiple portrayals. Krotoa's life has been interpreted in various ways. Christina Landman's analysis of the religious portrayals of Krotoa shows that the life of Krotoa

generates stories, it generates portrayals, it generates projections and objectification (1996:35). Krotoa was a translator, a negotiator, and the mother of the rainbow nation, the first Christian of colour. This was Eva, the naïve fighter for peace, the fierce Khoi woman, Eva the wife of the surgeon Van Meerhoff, the drunkard, the adulterous slut, the neglectful mother. All these portrayals have been written down in history. Krotoa has been written 'down' in history in the journals of Van Riebeeck and his wife whose accounts dominate those portrayals. Krotoa has suffered under the coloniser's pen. Almost all of the depictions of Krotoa appear to portray her as a helpless victim of vicious culture clashes or the accomplice of the colonial forces.

This discussion of the various portrayals of Krotoa will be used to expose how these portrayals have influenced the reception of Krotoa's characterisation in the film *Krotoa*.

5.2.1 Eva of the Dutch

The portrayals of Krotoa by the Dutch followed a chronology, based on the time-line of her life. Krotoa was baptised and renamed Eva—a name which fitted the 'civilised' way of life. As indicated above, Krotoa was the first native woman to be baptised and learned the values of Reformed Christianity. Thus, she is deemed the mother of Christian converts in South Africa. That Krotoa received a new name is no surprise given the colonial context of that time, but the name Eva indeed evokes many questions. It recalls the biblical Eva, with the connotation of immoral behaviours of the 'other.' It is interesting that the connotation of the name Eva relates to how she is perceived later in her life when she becomes the translator for the commander. Thus, the name was probably a conceptual metaphor for what she had become, the translator, the betrayer, the seductress.

Eva was a typical example of the women at the contact zone for the Dutch, their first rendezvous with the native. Her being at the contact zone is an indication of the so-called naivety of the Khoi tribe. The romantic escapade is prominent in records of colonising journeys. As a woman, she was a metaphor of the land that was open for the taking; that needed to be rescued and civilised.

5.2.2 Eva, the intelligent young girl

As a young girl, Eva was a wonder to the Dutch. Not only could she learn new languages, but she was a wonder also because of her ability to leave behind her savage ways and adopt the civilised ways of the Dutch. Some of the records refer to

her as having a Dutch heart. She was a savage with redeemable capabilities who cut a picture of what Christianity would look like in the 'other.' She became a respected 'other,' the symbol of what her people could become if they were to adopt the civilised way of living. Her respected otherness and her ability to translate skills afforded her respect like any other administrative staff in the fort. Wells (1998:420) entertains a different perspective as she assumes that Krotoa's position in the household of the commander could have been seen as a position of privilege and a sort of apprenticeship for the Khoi clan.

5.2.3 Krotoa back to her savage roots

The later portrayals of Krotoa became smeared as the conflict between the Khoi tribe and the Dutch unravelled and she was not useful to the Dutch people anymore. She was portrayed as a bad wife to Pieter van Meerhoff, and after his death, she was portrayed as a drunken widow and a neglectful mother. As such, her children were taken away from her, and in a sense, she returned to her roots, to the irredeemable savages that the Khoi people were thought to be, inherently. Conradie notes that "The Dutch diarist (Leibbrandt, 1902:209) implied that her death was evidence that civilisation could not defeat her inborn qualities" (Conradie, 1998:56). This was the final and overall portrayal of Krotoa by the Dutch after her death.

5.2.4 Eva, Van Riebeeck's Enchanter

The journals of Van Riebeeck reveal that he had been intrigued and charmed by Krotoa. She was supposedly his favourite servant girl who was able to articulate herself adequately in foreign languages. She was assertive. Eva used the opportunity of living in the household of the Van Riebeecks to her advantage and learned everything as a true Dutch child would. Wells captures Van Riebeeck's feelings as follow:

> Despite clear efforts to present a picture of respectability and decorum regarding Eva, Van Riebeeck reveals a high level of personal concern for her. Van Riebeeck represented himself as cautious and critical of her motives at all times. Further, a case can be made that Van Riebeeck had an intimate relationship with Eva at some point. The most compelling evidence comes from the larger picture, taken as a totality. The trust and reliance that Van Riebeeck invested in Eva clearly transcended the boundaries of a conventional master-servant relationship. He invited her to important meetings, explained important decisions to her, consulted her privately about vital issues, gave her the freedom to come and go and made her active sales agent. Perhaps most revealing is the sharp contrast between Van Riebeeck's attitude toward Eva and that of his successor, Zacharias Wagenaar. By comparison, Van Riebeeck

> had been gentle, considerate, tolerant, indulgent, and trusting of Eva in a highly subjective way. If Van Riebeeck was intimate with Eva, it is not surprising that it was carefully concealed in the Company journals. He clearly tried hard to represent her in a detached, professional manner. She appeared simply as being the right person conveniently on the spot whenever needed (Wells, 1998:412).

Abrahams interrogates the concern and enchantment that Van Riebeeck showed towards Eva as a form of sexual inappropriateness. She argues that the sexual assault, namely, rape was concealed under the so-called concern and enchantment.

5.2.5 Krotoa, the *'impimpi'*

The word *impimpi* connotes an informant, the one who betrays their own. In the process of Krotoa's career as an interpreter, her relationship with her own people became more and more strained. A conflict had ensued between the Khoi tribe and the Dutch about the land which the Dutch occupied and wanted to own, land which the Khoi had been living off. It has been speculated that Krotoa fed the commander information about the plans of the Khoi tribe to secure their lands and to prevent the Dutch from claiming a space they did not own. Krotoa was accused of prioritising the agenda of the Dutch at the expense of her own people. Specifically, she supposedly shared information about her uncle Autshumato and how he planned to benefit from the trades with the Dutch, which then confirmed Van Riebeeck's suspicions of his cunning ways.

Krotoa has been portrayed as a woman who willingly betrayed her own people in favour of the Dutch. There was speculation that she visited her people only to gather information about the plans of the Khoi tribes to safeguard their interest and their lands. The great conflict or the climax of the conflict was when both Krotoa and Doman (who Krotoa was supposed to get married to and also Herry's second in command) were appointed as negotiators for the commander. Doman then accused Krotoa of furthering Dutch agendas at the expense of the wellbeing of her own people. At that time, the Dutch had imported some slaves, which had gone missing and the Goringhaiqa tribe was blamed for their disappearance. Wells (1998:425) notes an instance where the Dutch used Krotoa as a scapegoat, blaming her for suggesting that they took captive the sons of the Goringhaiqa chief. The sons of the Goringhaiqa chief were kept as hostages and as a ransom for the missing slaves, and "Doman and his people presumed her guilty of openly assisting the Dutch" (Wells, 1998:425). This

endangered Krotoa's life, as the whole situation spiralled out of control very quickly, and the two cultures clashed. Wells notes that:

> The hostages languished in the fort for over a week, and only a few missing slaves reappeared. The hostages themselves argued that they should be joined by further hostages from all the local Khoena chiefdoms. So, the Dutch took more, including Eva's uncle, Autshumato, and seized all of his cattle. In the process, the Dutch killed one of his followers, the first Khoena death at their hands. Within two days, all parties concluded a peace treaty that freed the hostages and secured the return of the slaves. Significantly, it also contained clauses stating that the Goringhaiqua now gave up all claims to the Cape peninsula. So, what had started out as a tussle over runaway slaves, ended up with a Khoi cession of land to the Dutch, the imprisonment of Autshumato, the confiscation of his cattle and a Khoi death (Wells, 1998:425).

This situation became the nail in the coffin of the relationship between Krotoa and her people. Not only was she accused of causing her people to lose their lands, cattle, and livelihood, she was also blamed by the Dutch for how things turned out. The hostile situation reached a climax. Either way, Krotoa was the person to be blamed for all that went wrong between the Dutch and Khoi tribe. She was portrayed as the *impimpi* by both sides.

5.2.6 Krotoa the helpless victim/woman with a seat at the table

Julia Wells holds a different perspective from other historians about Krotoa's portrayal. She uses a positive optic to analyse Krotoa. She challenges the fact that almost every portrayal of Krotoa paints her as a helpless victim, but these portrayals do not give enough thought to the complexities of her life. Wells believes that Krotoa showed that she could handle herself well amongst those who saw themselves as superior to her. Thus, she should not be viewed as a victim but an intelligent woman who was in charge of the dealings between the natives and the Dutch. In her view, we should not focus merely on Krotoa's tragic death and the last days of her life but on the significant achievements and contributions that she made as an interpreter and peacekeeper. Wells' emphasis is on the Dutch who believed they were superior but had to rely on Krotoa's intelligence and her remarkable skills to negotiate and communicate with the people. Krotoa, therefore, had a seat at the table, even though this seat benefited the Dutch in the end. According to Wells (1998:418), Krotoa's story highlights the extraordinary influence and privilege that women could command in Khoi society. There has been ample mention of Khoi women joining their husbands in the trading enterprise in the Dutch records. Eva's life clearly exemplifies this dynamic, as she

served respectively as a youthful goodwill apprentice, interpreter, trading agent, ambassador for a high-ranking chief, and peace negotiator in time of war.

Wells' view remains a valid argument for many people including the producers of the 2017 film *Krotoa*, yet it is accompanied by many complexities and blind spots. I would argue that positionality and intersectionality play a vital role in this analysis. As a black woman, I cannot divorce the tragic outcome of Krotoa's life from her earlier years of being. The complexities of her life cannot be wished away. Krotoa died a bitter death in depression. She no longer had a seat at the table. There was no seat for her though they made her believe there would be a seat. Her story highlights the privilege of trading and the authority that Khoi women had in their community. The question however is was it a privilege or their way of being that women were treated as equal beings, as important beings, in the affairs of the community? To the Khoi, it was no privilege but then they are viewed and defined based on what the Dutch assumed to be the norm. Abrahams (1995:4) notes that there were no class or gender hierarchies in the Khoi community; these were a western construction, projected onto the Khoi.

Indeed, given where we are today, the significant role Krotoa played in the colonial process should be acknowledged but it should not be romanticised. Krotoa was a victim of colonial dominance and colonial strategies which resulted in irreversible trauma for her own people and orchestrated her early death. Abrahams notes the consequences of this colonial dominance that took place in the Cape Good Hope, as she writes, "In the three centuries following Eva's lifetime the Khoisan lost their land, their culture and much of their history. How does the modern Khoisan historian reverse this process?" (Abrahams, 1996:5). There can never be a reversal or compensation that will restore what the Khoi lost, but for decolonising purposes, we should attempt to reconstruct and deconstruct claims and assumptions that do not fully articulate the richness of the Khoi heritage.

5.3 The Religious Krotoa

The trajectory of Krotoa's life is drenched in religious ideology. The colonial goal remains God, glory and gold, and the Dutch were no exception. Christina Landman writes that a black Eva was made in South Africa. She sees "Krotoa as the original Christian ancestral mother of South African Christianity" (Landman, 1998:358). There is no doubt that the Dutch ushered in a kind of Calvinism that was based on Dutch

societal values when they came to South Africa. Krotoa was the first native person in South Africa to whom Calvinist theology was taught.

5.3.1 Ancient Religious Portrayals of Krotoa

Wells (1998:419) describes Van Riebeeck as a charismatic Calvinist eager to convert members of the local community. Krotoa's religious identity according to Landman (1998) was wrapped in the Calvinistic theology that Van Riebeeck brought to South Africa. She notes that "he had read aloud a prescribed prayer at his arrival at the Cape in April 1652, Van Riebeeck has been honoured for being the first to proclaim the (Reformed) gospel on South African soil" (Landman, 1996:22). This point is interesting especially the connection between Christianity and colonialism. Van Riebeeck, the man with the surreal religious habits, was also the first man to have written and generated a historical account of Krotoa.

In the journals of Van Riebeeck, after the hostage situation, Krotoa pleaded for the life of her uncle Autshumato. She pleaded that he should be released from incarceration on Robben Island. Van Riebeeck compared her to the biblical character Esther who pleaded for the life of her uncle Mordecai, which suggests that she conformed, in Van Riebeeck's eyes, to the ideals of the biblical Esther (Landman, 1996:22). Van Riebeeck invested in Krotoa's religious potential after she was baptised. Each time Eva went to her family for the traditional puberty or death rituals, he believed or wrote in his journal that she went to pray for her people. He wrote that she might have moved between cultures, changing from skin clothes to the Indian clothes, but she always remembered the Lord on her journeys. According to him, she completely left behind her uncivilised way of worship. Landman (1996:23) believes that Jan van Riebeeck was unaware that Krotoa was living happily and contextually in two different religious worlds. In fact, Van Riebeeck took for granted Krotoa's Christian religiosity as part of her function as an interpreter and cultural broker, that he did not mention her baptism, a formal ceremony, in his journal one week before he and his family left the Cape of Good Hope for good on 8 May 1662.

The Van Riebeeck household was deeply invested in Krotoa's spiritual life and it celebrated her for converting to Christianity. However, his successor did not share that sentiment. Rather, Commander Wagenaer was suspicious of Krotoa's religiosity, as he believed that Krotoa was the embodiment of a flawed Christian. According to

Landman, Wagenaer was embarrassed about Krotoa's relationship with Pieter van Meerhoff because it advanced a non-Israelite ideology about pure and impure blood. The children of Krotoa and Pieter were the first offspring of mixed blood on South African soil. Wagenaer agreed to their wedding because living together was not the way of the Dutch. In the last years of her life, Wagenaer saw the irony in Krotoa's name, Eva. He believed she lived up to her name as the biblical character Eva who disobeyed, doing what she was not supposed to do. This of course was predicated on her not bending to the Commander's rule. In her last years after her husband died and her children were taken away from her, she did not live a Christian life according to Wagenaer. This was a great embarrassment to the Commander but also a confirmation to what he had portrayed her to be. Wagenaer's diary entry about Krotoa's death and burial was a clear indication of his dissatisfaction and nonchalant interest in Krotoa as a human being. It was business as usual to him. He wrote about the weather and observed that on the very day of Krotoa's death it had been remarkably beautiful and peaceful in the Cape. Krotoa was buried the next day on the mainland according to Christian custom. Interestingly, Landman relates his journal entry which shows that "The body of the deceased Hottentot, Eva, was, notwithstanding her unchristian life, buried to-day according to Christian usage in the church of the new Castle" (Landman, 1996:23-24). Krotoa received more attention as a religious person from Wagenaer than from Van Riebeeck because he found her actions to be unchristian, and the example of what would happen when you try to civilise savages with the word of God.

5.3.2 Later Portrayals of Krotoa

It is interesting, as Landman (1998) notes, that Krotoa's religiosity did not attract much attention two to three centuries after her death, specifically, from the Dutch. This may be because of Commander Wagenaer's embarrassment and view of her Christianity. Rather, the historiographical focus was on the white women from European and Western countries coming to teach black women about Christianity. According to Landman (1998:24), the historical accounts portrayed white women as heroines and saviours of religious history in South Africa and the native black women as helpless recipients. Further, Landman relates that:

> It was not until the late 1920s that biographies of local black women dawned upon the local and international Christian community. But attention was given primarily to 'good'

> black women converts who remained functional nice and subdued in the service of the Lord (Landman, 1998:24).

Krotoa did not fit the depiction they envisioned; her Christian lifestyle did not portray what a good Christian woman should be—a submissive woman, in total service of the Lord and her masters. As Landman notes, only later in the 1930s did missionaries as A. Mooreers refer to Krotoa's Christianity, but this was in favour of the piety of the Dutch.

Mooreers romanticised the origin of Christianity in South Africa and shows that Krotoa's life story was used as collateral. He reported on what the early Dutch colonialists in the Cape Good Hope considered missionary devotion and motivation to be. They sought to bring life to the natives of Cape Good Hope, but they encountered religious ignorance and resistance in the Khoi people. He was influenced by the colonial depiction of the Khoi people as savages. Mooreers believed Krotoa was an exception to the rule. He commended the Van Riebeecks for Krotoa's religiosity, for he believed that the Van Riebeecks deeply invested in the salvation of her soul. He fantasised about Van Riebeeck's journal entry on Krotoa's baptism. He believed if Van Riebeeck did one thing right before his departure, it was to ensure Krotoa was an officially baptised Christian. Further, he romanticised Krotoa's final years in prison, believing that she repented despite the report in Wagenaer's journals. He argued that Krotoa should be excused for having grown up amongst the Khoi, as her formative years played a big role in why she was not a good Christian. He also believed that the Dutch probably did not model good Christian behaviour during her time at the fort, or that they were bad examples to Krotoa by not disciplining her correctly. He did not consider in any way the idea of a clash of cultures that were religiously divergent in Krotoa's spiritual journey.

Landman also notes a similar yet different interpretation of Krotoa's religiosity in the interpretation of Godeē Molsbergen's historiographical accounts about Krotoa's religiosity as well as Van Riebeeck's colonial intentions toward Krotoa. Molsbergen believed that Van Riebeeck had noble intentions, as he wanted to Krotoa transcend her savage nature. He also brought her into his home so that he could learn the Khoi language and understand their ways of being, because it is the Christian thing to do. He attempted with great efforts to convert Krotoa, but her character was flawed, culturally and morally, as can be seen in her life trajectory. She was taught Christian

principles for years in a Christian household but her savage nature remained embedded in her. He illustrated this by saying she often went back to wearing skin clothes of the uncivilised and that she had two children out of wedlock. Despite Van Riebeeck's efforts to teach her the Christian way, immorality was in her nature. Godeē Molsbergen's depiction of Krotoa's religiosity is a typical missionary approach which holds that missionaries try their best to civilise the natives and enlighten them but because of their immoral nature, the missionaries might not succeed. The natives' savage nature stood in the way of their salvation.

Another historiographer D. B. Bosman's perspective of Krotoa's religiosity was inspired by Mooreers and Molsbergen's accounts, which he published in an article, "Uit die biografie van Hottentottin: 'n eksperiment in beskawing" (1942). Landman articulates his argument as follows:

> Bosman tells the story of Krotoa as the story of a failed experiment in civilization, that is, a story of a white experiment and a black failure. In a sense, Bosman's views on the Khoekhoe reflect mid-twentieth century views not only of the Khoekhoe but also of contemporary blacks as naturally barbarous and slow in understanding Christianity. According to Bosman's story, the Khoekhoe (still called Hottentotte in 1942) was irreligious. They had no religion just as the sounds they made had no resemblance to a civilized language; consequently, no Christian could speak it (Landman, 1998:26).

In essence, these historiographers did not view the Khoi as human beings but barbarians who rejected any form of civilisation, and the love of the Dutch God.

Despite these perspectives of the early 1990s, a portrayal of Krotoa in the 1960s surfaced, as an archivist M. K. Jeffreys had analysed Krotoa. Her focus was to reclaim black women's human dignity in historical accounts, contrary to Bosman, Mooreers and Molsbergen's depictions of women like Krotoa. Jeffreys decolonised those depictions in her writings which appeared in Zulu, and published in the prestige black magazine, *The Drum*. She tried to recreate Krotoa for historical purposes—as the pioneer of civilisation and as the mother of the coloured population. These two images represented Krotoa's positive contributions. Jeffrey was not too concerned about Krotoa's religiosity and Landman (1998:26-27) contends that in contrast to previous authors who blamed Krotoa's early death on her immorality and irreligiosity, neither Jeffreys nor Krotoa needed religion to elevate Krotoa to the position of mother of the nation and midwife to civilisation. Jeffreys then succeeded in making Krotoa functional in raising black consciousness, albeit implying black participation in a white (Dutch)

form of civilisation. This perspective may evoke further investigation and inquiry, yet it is a practical perspective that liberates Krotoa from the portrayals of the historians who perpetuated colonial ideologies. Liberating Krotoa is a process of deconstruction, deconstructing centuries of trauma and the ideological portrayals referred to and specified above.

5.4 Deconstructing the 'Religious' Krotoa

In the Krotoa narrative and historiography, there remains a construct of duality—a duality of cultures, duality about her spirituality. In this duality, Krotoa remains objectified, and therefore it is important to consider a deconstruction of her religiosity as portrayed by the white Dutch colony and later upheld by historians who claim objectivity.

The Khoi and their way of life amused the Dutch. However, their spirituality was deeply undermined by the Dutch, in line with a colonial mindset. Krotoa's spirituality somewhat appeared peculiar to the Dutch; they could not make sense of her spirituality. They, therefore, taught her the Christian way—that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. She agreed to be baptised (only later in life under some circumstances) and adapted the Dutch way of worship, though she remained true to her Khoi roots and form of worship. She probably experienced the Christian God differently from her Khoi God. Historians make a distinction between her Khoi Gods and the Christian God; the Khoi God is presented as her cultural God and the God of the Dutch was presented as the natural God. There is no consideration that Krotoa may have seen her 'cultural' God as natural and the God of the Dutch as a social construct, or that she made no distinction between the Gods but experienced them differently.

Much of Krotoa's Christian teachings came from the Commander's wife, Maria Van Riebeeck. The depth of the teachings is not known, but we know that Maria was the daughter of a Reformed minister. Landman questions the depth of the religious teachings Krotoa received from Maria and the kind of Christian teachings a 22-year-old woman could teach a 10-year-old little girl. She writes:

> The Maria who went to the Cape was probably still too young to have formed religious ideas independent from the culturally determined ones she was taught as a child. But then again, European women from the time of the protestant reformation were never really informed about the dogmatics of Protestantism. Theology was left to the men.

> Women were mainly the receivers of the moral and cultural stylization which accompanied theological orthodoxy. Therefore, since neither Maria nor the young Khoekhoe girl Krotoa was dogmatically sophisticated, the conversion of Krotoa probably went smoothly on the naive dogmatic level (Landman, 1996:30).

Krotoa being a little girl encountering teachings of a foreign God may have tried to make sense of this God in the form of comparison. Thus, it is possible that when Maria taught Krotoa about the merciful nature of God, the one who provides and protects, the God who predetermined life for his followers on earth, Krotoa may have compared this God to the mighty Khoi God, *TsuillGoab,* the one who provided rain and life in abundance, who created all things on earth and was loved and celebrated by her people. Again, Maria taught Krotoa about the other side of God, the angry side of the God, who does not let sins go unpunished, the enemy of Satan who works to ensure God's children go to hell. Krotoa may have made sense of this God by comparing him with the evil force *Gaunab* which the Khoi regard as the spirit of all evil whom they needed to pacify with sacrifices. When Maria also taught Krotoa about Jesus and his resurrection, Krotoa could identify with Jesus because of their god *Heitsi-Eibib*, the god who died multiple times but always came back to life.

Krotoa was able to identify with the Dutch God because spirituality was not alien to the Khoi people, who were very much in touch with their spirituality in every facet of their lives. The Dutch only interpreted the Khoi way of worship as demonic and absurd because they did not worship the foreign white God who deemed the Khoi inferior to the Dutch. Abrahams (1995) suggests that historical sources about the Khoisan be re-evaluated within the historical context, less for what they can teach us about the Khoisan than what we can infer from the Dutch/European interpretations of the Khoisan. Krotoa was indeed a spiritual being; however, her spirituality did not fit the Dutch construction of spirituality.

5.5 Krotoa—a Speculative History

5.5.1 Introduction

As alluded to before, there is no accurate and definite account of the life story of Krotoa. Krotoa never recorded her own life story. All that we have is the written accounts of her coloniser, and the first portrayal of her character is through Jan van Riebeeck's journal of 1653. As Wells (1998:417) notes, "Malherbe is Eva's chief biographer, describing Eva as primarily 'a woman in between." However, this

biography is based only on the journals of Van Riebeeck and Wagenaer. Abrahams also used Malherbe's accounts of Krotoa as her primary source, but she disagrees with various claims. For instance, she rejects the view that Krotoa was a woman in between. Rather, Krotoa was at the heart of it all. The fate of her people became her fate.

To decolonise Krotoa's story through a postcolonial feminist approach, different portrayals of her person need to be explored. This would help to not only reclaim and disrupt the colonising marks on the body of Krotoa but also to liberate and reconstruct life-giving historical accounts of amazing figures like Krotoa. As a decolonising agent, Abrahams laments that Krotoa is written down in history under the coloniser's pen:

> I can only say that I am attempting to speak about the unspeakable, to write about precisely that which would be impossible to write about any other way. Eva did not write the sources, and the sources are emphatically not about her. She is objectified in the text, appearing there only as and when she plays a role in the strategic objectives of the VOC. Yet the memory of her enemies is all we have to go on (Abrahams, 1996:4).

Even if Krotoa did write her own life story, in the colonial climate, it would have been placed over and against other contextual accounts of her time. Her truth would have been a speculated one. Thus, Abrahams expended much time and effort into reclaiming the hegemonic portrayals of Krotoa in history, disrupting the comfort of using Krotoa as a scapegoat. She tried to re-portray Krotoa and more importantly interrogate why Krotoa reacted and dealt with life as she did. Thus, Abrahams suggests that we speculate and reread Krotoa through the lens of a rape victim and not merely as an object or a subject in a historical account. Musa Dube supports Abrahams' line of thought, contending that the literary strategies of decolonisation entail rereading the coloniser's texts for liberation. Simply put, we need to reread the master's texts and retell history, tell a life-giving history (Dube 2000:103). Dube refers to this process of retelling and undermining the coloniser's accounts as the decolonising zone. At the decolonising zone, the texts of the coloniser are evoked specifically to undermine the coloniser's contentions about the victims' texts and accounts.

Abrahams points out that we must bear in mind that any account about the life of Krotoa remains speculative, it is the construction of what supposedly happened based on specific judgments. This, she calls speculative history. Speculative history moves the focus from the evidence and facts to opinion judgment. This theory does not

disregard the method of probing historiography in all historical accounts. Rather, she argues for a viable alternative, a speculative history, specifically, in the case of Krotoa's life trajectory.

Her approaches do not conform to the normative approaches to history, which is, based on facts and evidence. Rather the approach attempts to tell a different truth. Abrahams defines her approach as an outsider approach in the following words:

> This speculative history I write is an outsider to 'normal' history as much as Eva was an outsider to the writer of the journals. The method should suit the subject. As a woman of a colonized people, Eva herself was subject to a series of racist and sexist assumptions which are clearly reflected in the journals. The sources themselves were part of a process of 'othering' which seemed a key component of the process of creating a colonizing culture (Abrahams, 1996:4-5).

I concur with Abrahams' point that Krotoa was an outsider to all the historiographical writings about her life. The reality is that any portrayal or written account of Krotoa's life was from an outsider perspective.

Clearly, Abrahams' goal is to find an alternative perspective of Krotoa and her life story. In the form of narrative, Abrahams speculates a different reality. She contends that there must be more to Krotoa's life than what is given to us by her colonisers. Abrahams believes that her memory and her history together with the history of the Khoi-san clan should be reclaimed but not in a manner that re-objectifies them. Landman, too, argues for a deconstruction of the portrayals and that the conceptual metaphors need to be undermined and deconstructed. Thus, this section attempts to deconstruct these portrayals by re-examining them and applying a speculative optic to analyse Krotoa. The approach is unique to a postcolonial feminist reading optic and I believe it is required in order to present a deconstructive, speculative perspective of Krotoa and her portrayals.

Yvette Abrahams deconstructs several perspectives and assumptions about Krotoa, without disregarding historiographic accounts of the life of Krotoa entirely. Rather, she places emphasis on the gaps in historiographical accounts to reclaim Krotoa and the colonial portrayals. We need to speculate wildly, for Krotoa to make sense in a seventeenth-century setting. To analyse Krotoa in historiography, Abrahams suggests that we approach the historiography about her life, as she would have done, as she would have explained and portrayed her own life. As such, the speculative history in narrative form is evident.

5.5.2 Krotoa, the Rape Victim

Abrahams speculates about the possibility that Krotoa may have been a victim of sexual violence. She believes that many things do not make sense in the life trajectory of Krotoa; therefore, she speculates wildly that Krotoa presented behavioural traits of a rape trauma victim. The life trajectory of Krotoa and Krotoa's behavioural pattern, according to Abrahams, are consistent with those of a sexual violence trauma victim. Krotoa's childhood experiences must have been extremely traumatic and confusing to an eight to ten-year-old little girl. These effects would have affected her path later in her life. She had to adapt to strange circumstances and probably suffered separation anxiety, which later resulted in a condition of unresolved mental health issues of rejection and unhealthy relationship attachments. These are all valid speculations that are worth considering. As Abrahams suggests, filling in the gaps, we need to speculate, but not just speculate as many historians have done. We should speculate in a way that dignifies Krotoa and does not subject her to further objectification.

5.5.3 Krotoa, the Little Girl

Abrahams recognises the challenges that accompany her speculations. Being able to prove rape in contemporary society is difficult enough, how much more difficult would it be, then, to prove that Krotoa was raped in the seventeenth century. She bases her argument on the reality that with slavery and colonial accounts, rape remains an embedded strategy of dominance. Van Riebeeck's journals present many gaps, and this is grounds for speculation. His silence on the initial arrival of Krotoa at the fort is interesting because he had recorded every activity including weather accounts. Why would he fail to mention that a young child arrived at the fort to be a maid to his wife and the circumstances that brought her there? She had spent ample time at the fort and learned to speak Dutch there. Surely, this should have been newsworthy enough to diarise. His first diary inscription about her was when she had to go back to the Goringhaiqa tribe for a tribal ceremony.

Abrahams speculates that Krotoa may have been kidnapped by the Dutch officials:

> Since the Dutch were a slave-owning culture, it is not unnatural that slavery should be a theme of white/Khoisan interaction from the start. She speculates that Khoisan's was not enslaved was because at this point they were still too powerful - except in the case of one little girl (Abrahams, 1996:13).

Further, she speculates that the countless visits by Autshumato (Herrie) and the other Khoi people may have been in search of the little girl and the livestock was used as an excuse to have access to the fort. She bases her argument on the fact that the Khoi people were very protective of their children and the likelihood that they would just hand over 'one' little girl as trade is farfetched. She refers to the instance in 1509 when the Khoi-san people fought and were prepared to kill to protect their children. In all these, we need to acknowledge that this little girl must have been deeply traumatised and disorientated. Abrahams contends that:

> Eva must have had a strange "childhood". To be thrust into the heart of Khoisan/white interactions at the age of ten or eleven, and alone confronted with a culture which even her elders were having trouble understanding, must in itself have been traumatic (Abrahams, 1996:14).

Abrahams points out that because rape was not something that existed in the seventeenth century amongst the Khoi people, Krotoa may have indeed been a victim of rape but did not understand what this phenomenon entailed.

5.5.4 Krotoa, the Teenager

Krotoa's life changed even more drastically when she became a teenager. In late 1657, after she left the fort and returned, the situation between the Dutch and the Khoi became more hostile. As the Dutch suspected that Krotoa had returned to aid the hostility, things took a turn for the worse. The Khoi realised that the Dutch did not plan to be visitors anymore but wanted to colonise the land and threaten their way of life; the 'refreshment' station was no longer a pit stop but a destination. The Khoi believed that the Dutch took their hospitality for granted and they were ready to resist this planned colonisation by the Dutch who were set on occupying more land with the intent of ownership. It was clear to the Dutch also that the Khoi would fight back. Therefore, when the imported slaves went missing, the Dutch blamed the Khoi for the disappearance of their slaves. Eva's role as interpreter and negotiator became very daunting at this point, as she was no longer the only interpreter. Doman also had become an interpreter between the Dutch and the Khoi though his approach was different from Eva's. Doman, with his consciousness of colonialism after returning from Batavia, believed in the radical approach of hostility towards the Dutch, whereas Krotoa believed in forging a middle ground. Krotoa believed that the two cultures could find a way to co-exist without the one extinguishing the other, but this was the beginning of the end. Despite all that was going on, Krotoa negotiated with both sides

and suggested that the Dutch and the Khoi live together in peace. She believed in the humanity of the Dutch, and that she could appeal to that humanity.

Krotoa was possibly set up by the Dutch, and she may have been used as a scapegoat. Abrahams (1996:18) believes that Van Riebeeck must have played Krotoa and Doman against each other, telling Doman that something was Krotoa's idea when she was not in their presence. Abrahams (1996:18) shows in the following that the journals of Van Riebeeck confirm the claim that Krotoa possibly was used as a scapegoat:

> The incident with the missing slaves led to the idea that the Dutch take captive the sons of the Goringhaiqa chief, this was presented as an idea of Krotoa. This led to many Khoi people being kept captive by the Dutch ultimately leading to the death of one of them. Not only is this tragic but that one of Krotoa's people had to die, but she was blamed for everything that went wrong in this hostage situation. But Doman... was so angry that he could not restrain his anger and said in the presence of all the Hottentots that the interpreter Eva had advised us to do this, and that he wished to destroy her at once. She immediately denied the charge and. though the charge was true, we confirmed the denial (Thom *Journal*. 21 June 1658.2:286; 23 Sept. 1658.2:343; 29 Oct. 1658.2:363).

The question is, how could Krotoa, who had been fighting for peaceful co-existence of the two cultures, suggest something so violent? It does not make sense. Doman, being most loyal to his people, gave this information to the Khoi. He painted a picture of Krotoa as a traitor, and this caused her people to disown her.

For Abrahams, Krotoa presents behavioural patterns of a sexual violence victim, specifically, of a rape victim. Krotoa continued to treat the Dutch as human beings despite what they were doing to her people. Abrahams articulates the paradox in this thus:

> Humanness is a quality which is hard to live without. To react to rape by implicating oneself may not be the best reaction, but it is a workable one. Thus, the dehumanization of rape does not lie in the act alone, nor only in the memory of it, but in the trauma, which induces the rape victim to deny her own subjectivity (Abrahams, 1996:10).

Counterintuitively, her journey back to full humanity became obstructed by her need to see the white as human.

Another factor that needs to be considered is that Krotoa may have grown up in an environment where she rotated between the fort and the inland, being present but not having any real social connection and interaction with the people who understood her.

Her path seems to be a lonely path. The diaries of Van Riebeeck show that she was close to her sister or cousin, but they only saw each other periodically. As such, she had no support system to which she could turn. Abrahams (1996:11) observes that rape victims so often lack supportive social environments in which to explore other ways of resolving their trauma. She argues that rape needs to be contextualised and that the psychological dynamics of rape need to be considered.

In the case of Krotoa, the question remains about the social and cultural contexts wherein the rape victim attempted to regain their humanity. Krotoa's environment was layered with hostility and she was in the middle of it all. It was an environment where one group fought to ensure its survival and the other fought to colonise the former, and, Krotoa was blamed for the conflict. Krotoa was a teenager trying to process the trauma of rape and abandonment, which could have resulted in her feeling that no one understood her—neither her people nor the Dutch. As such, Krotoa had no supportive social environment in which she could experience or discover ways of healing, of resolving the trauma of her possible rape. She remained a victim of sexual assault, with no vocabulary and understanding of what she was going through. Krotoa's interaction with Van Riebeeck should be analysed as a possible symptom of dissociation.

Employing a hermeneutic of suspicion and rape trauma awareness to analyse her interactions with the Dutch as well as her relationship with Van Meerhoff may also show that her behaviour could be a result of her trauma. Her subsequent problem with alcohol, therefore, could be seen as a coping mechanism for the trauma she had endured. It should be seen as a self-hatred, self-destruct symptom very common to rape survivors. Abrahams (1996:19) contends that the saddest part of Eva's story has to do with her given name; that she was truly the first woman to tread a path many Khoisan women were forced to tread years later. Perhaps the brightest part of her story is that after her lifetime, no Khoisan woman was ever left to tread that path alone. No one else had to be 'the first woman.' Eva's experiences and portrayals were surely passed on from generation to generation.

To sum up on the idea of speculation, if Krotoa was raped, it should be an open-ended debate. However, throughout her engagement with the Dutch, she could have been sexually violated at almost any phase of her life. She was certainly extremely vulnerable given the time under dispute, in which she was a child, a teenager and a

young woman. The fact that she may have been raped remains a disputed claim, but that she suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder is not up for speculation. It is clearly embodied in her life trajectory. In order to re-evaluate Krotoa's life, we need to acknowledge fully her ordeal. Her achievements must be measured against the conditions of her life. The complex history of colonialism is at the heart of these circumstances. Krotoa as a possible rape victim is also at the heart of this re-evaluation.

Inevitably, Krotoa endured the deepest form of colonial brutality. She was enslaved, battered, abused, and drained of her usefulness and discarded by the Dutch colony, yet, she remained undefeated and a powerful figure and fighter of the seventeenth century. She was astute, and an impeccable linguist, which is so much more important than her being the 'mother' of the nation. It is so much more important as it presents her as an intellectual and not the normalized 'nurturing mother' of her time. Given her circumstances, she survived the worst of the patriarchal world of her time. She celebrated her life as a diplomat and when there was nothing more to celebrate, she stopped living on her own terms!

5.6 Krotoa in the Film *Krotoa* (2017)

Krotoa has been portrayed in various ways, as already noted. Her character has enjoyed much attention, given the ample historical accounts of her story throughout history. However, the most popular account of the life of Krotoa is presented in the 2017 film *Krotoa*, which was directed by Roberta Durant. The film *Krotoa,* which appeared on the screen in 2017, has risen beyond the limited audiences of historical accounts or historiography. It has become part of popular culture and of the arts industry since it was screened in cinemas. The analysis of Krotoa's character will be explored through postcolonial film principles as communicated in chapter 3. By way of analogy, the colonial strategies used in the portrayals of Krotoa's character will be identified and analysed.

5.6.1 Analysing the Character Krotoa in *Krotoa* (2017)

In a postcolonial country shaped by the complex history of colonialism and identity politics, the film *Krotoa* (Durant, 2017) has generated ample discontent with the portrayals of Krotoa and the formulation of the sore history of South Africa but

somehow the script has received a range of awards. The film, however, was acclaimed in the Afrikaner media community (newspapers, blogs, social media etc.), such as Leon van Nierop's blog (2018), which praises it for being "one of the best local films ever made" and for its "sober" and "unbiased" (2018) depiction of South African history. *Krotoa* has been applauded as the greatest local film articulating this complex history, and as an impartial and clear-minded portrayal of events.

This section examines the character of Krotoa as presented in the film *Krotoa*. Reading and analysing with postcolonial intent requires a pragmatic reading optic. A postcolonial optic as referred to in previous chapters becomes a challenge when analysing modern texts specifically in popular culture, and in this case, film. However, specific principles are applied via analogy. In this discussion, specific scenes from the film, *Krotoa,* will be analysed by way of analogy, and specific colonial progressions will be investigated. The primary goal is to investigate the characterisation of Krotoa and show how this portrayal perpetuates colonial strategies. This visual representation of Krotoa has the potential to influence and cloud the interpretation of Krotoa and Khoi culture because there is no evidence of adequate consideration of the embedded ideologies and complexities of colonialism that mark the interactions of the Dutch with the Khoi people. The historiography of Krotoa is much more than the 'love story' between her, Van Riebeeck and Van Meerhoff. It is about a woman battered by colonialism, drained for her usefulness, and later castoff as a drunkard. The film neglects to portray adequately the Khoi as a deeply cultured and resilient tribe. The visual representations of the tribe is a shallow account of the Khoi's resistance of colonialism, as it presents them as a people who sell out one of their own for cheap benefits and incentives from the Dutch without exploring how the people became seared objects in the hands of the colonial forces. Rather, the film presents a greater exploration of the 'humanity' of Van Riebeeck who is depicted as the saviour of Krotoa.

Analysing the film with a specific reading optic entails delineating the film and discussing various scenes and various colonial and imperial strategies perpetuated in the visual representations of Krotoa. This will be done through a postcolonial critique of the film, which will show the visual representation of Krotoa as an object of the male gaze, of the colonial gaze, and of the ethnic gaze, and how she has been portrayed as a gendered metaphor.

5.6.2 Krotoa at the Contact Zone

The first point of colonial progression in this film is the scene that presents Krotoa as a little girl at the contact zone. The contact zone, as noted to above, is the point of encounter between different cultures, usually where trading takes place, and the native is exploited for their rich indigenous resources. The contact zone is also the place that the understanding of mutual dependence between the coloniser and the colonised is established, with the colonised always getting the shorter end of the stick. Krotoa at the contact zone is the first female agent of contact. As Van Riebeeck and Herry are busy trading livestock, Krotoa then becomes the focal point in this transaction. She speaks 'Dutch,' and this linguistic skill intrigues and impresses Van Riebeeck who exclaims, "Sy Praat Hollands!" Her uncle Autshumato has taught her a few words of Dutch. There seems to be some disagreement in the transaction specifically with the compensation, which consists of alcohol, tobacco, and trinkets. Autshumato bargains for better compensation, at least three packets of tobacco and one bottle of alcohol. Van Riebeeck is portrayed as an accommodating man who agrees to the terms and asks that Autshumato provide him with someone to help his wife who will be having a baby soon. Autshumato agrees to help since there are many midwives in the tribe, but Van Riebeeck has Krotoa in mind and negotiates for her. He wants someone clever, like Krotoa, who can easily learn Dutch ways and language.

This scene presents the colonised girl in the contact zone. Krotoa is a gendered metaphor representing the virgin state of the land as well as the purity and nativity in the form of a child's innocence, the maiden at the contact zone. Here the metaphor is the land opening her arms broad to receive the visitor, and they are supplied with food (in this case, cattle). The land then becomes centred on the idealised protagonist (the coloniser), in this case, Van Riebeeck. The scene then presents what Shohat (1991:46) refers to as the metaphoric portrayal of the available land as a virgin coyly awaiting the touch of the coloniser. It implies that the whole land could benefit from the emanation of colonial praxis. In this scene, the trading with 'Herry' projects the benefits the coloniser has to offer. Here we meet both the girl at the contact zone and the girl as a gendered metaphor for the land opening her arms to the colonising visitors. Krotoa at the contact zone, as Shohat (1991:47) suggests, presents the uncivilised and underdeveloped dark land. She represents the potential and fertility of the land to the coloniser. Not only is this a case in which the coloniser encounters the native

woman, in this case, Krotoa is presented as one in need of saving and bettering, for she is an astute and intelligent girl. Her talents will not go to waste if Van Riebeeck saves and trains her. She would then be able to learn the ways and language of his people. The gendered metaphor of the land that is open for taking and development shows Van Riebeeck as the activator and harvester of the fertile land and its rich resources.

5.6.3 Naming and Renaming

Subsequently, Krotoa is renamed, Eva. This renaming happens quite early in the film, immediately after Van Riebeeck brings Krotoa to the fort and introduces her to his wife, Maria van Riebeeck. Krotoa bombards Maria with her uncivilised appearance. She reeks of 'kraal,' and she is dressed inappropriately. She is then civilised with the long heavy dresses and a headscarf. The process of colonialism is well on its way. It is only when Maria teaches Krotoa 'Dutch' that she decides that Krotoa's name sounds too uncivilised and that Eva, a Christian name, would better suit her. Maria not only teaches Krotoa 'Dutch'/ Afrikaans, but she also teaches her about the Bible assuring Krotoa that she will learn many new words, but the most important words are written in the Holy Book of God. This process of renaming Krotoa confirms the coloniser's (in this case, Maria's) ownership of the colonised. Krotoa's new name bears a European and Christian identification.

5.6.4 Krotoa the Teenager as Encountered Native Woman

In a subsequent scene, Van Riebeeck's prepares for the French monsieur Bassett's visit. Krotoa in this scene suffers under the colonial gaze. She is portrayed as astute and intelligent. She is fluent also in French, which is remarkable especially for a native from the Dark Continent. The French monsieur is very impressed with this young woman, and this depicts Krotoa as an object in the process of colonial discourse, paraded in front of the monsieur. She is a metaphor for the welcoming newfound land. Krotoa in this scene comes across as friendly and charming towards the French monsieur. Her intelligence becomes an object of study. The interesting thing is that Krotoa is presented as flirty, and her dress reveals her neckline, which contrasts with the heavy clothing of everyone around the table. Maria is covered up to her neck. The French monsieur notes that she is such a rare beauty in such a wild part of the world. How ironic!

This scene turns the male gaze on Krotoa. She is desired by the 'discoverer' and she represents the forbidden desire and fruits of the Dark Continent. Krotoa's friendliness towards the monsieur is linked to her sexuality and to the fertile land that is open to being colonised. This scene is also the first scene where Pieter Van Meerhoff appears. As the discoverer, he also observes Krotoa as the exotic other. As alluded to in the previous chapter, the Orient as a gendered metaphor takes its form here. The Orient (Krotoa) is a metaphor for sexuality encapsulated by the recurrent figure of the veiled woman. As a servant girl, she appears inaccessible, mirroring the mystery of the orient itself. This inaccessibility requires a process of colonial unveiling for comprehension. The orient metaphor gaze that requires comprehension and unveiling is portrayed in this scene where Krotoa takes a walk and the French man follows her with the intent of forcing himself on her, but she resists and runs away from him.

5.6.5 Moses-like Characterisation

A Moses-like characterisation also occurs as the coloniser takes on the role of saviour and liberator of the colonised woman. In the same scene where Krotoa resists the violation of Bassett and manages to run away, Van Riebeeck comes to her aid and he is portrayed as a salvation figure, saving Krotoa from an attempted sexual violation. The idea of liberating and saving Krotoa is interesting. Van Riebeeck intervenes and saves Krotoa from the attempted violation, yet he has the same desire towards her. He has been objectifying her with his male gaze ever since she was a little girl. It seems that he is saving her for himself. This also comes as an Adam-like portrayal. Van Riebeeck should not be blamed for his inappropriate desires because his saving Krotoa justifies his male gaze.

5.6.6 Sexual Violence and Rape in Colonisation Progression

It is interesting that immediately after the scene in which Bassett attempts to rape Krotoa another scene focuses on Krotoa's sexual desire. Krotoa is in bed masturbating. The gaze of those who are watching the film is controlled by the filmmaker, as they watch a woman touching herself. The scene again shifts immediately from Krotoa to the Van Riebeeck's home. Here the irony is quite clear. Maria is sleeping peacefully in her nightgown again covering herself up to her neck while her husband lies awake restless. He makes his way to Krotoa's room in the middle of the night finding her asleep after satisfying herself. She is sexualised and

again under his male gaze. In this case, the sexually immoral woman is observed right after she was almost raped. There are contrast and a play between the white woman's sexuality which is deemed conservative and morale and that of the native woman who explores her own sexuality. The white woman is then granted positional moral superiority. After the incident with Bassett, the portrayal of Krotoa as a virgin and a sexually moral woman is tamed and starting to change. This is a process of exposing the female 'other' as immoral and uncivilised.

5.6.7 Colonised Gaze and Christianity

The colonised gaze is very much linked to religious superiority. The combination of God, gold and glory is a prevalent colonial strategy. Later, Krotoa tells Maria that she wants to go home to her people, and then returns the Bible to Maria. Maria acts ignorantly and refuses to let Krotoa go home. When Krotoa resists, Maria says that she will read her an obedience text. This shows that Christianity is a powerful instrument in the process of colonisation. In the colonial gaze, the Christian religion enjoys superiority above all other religions. Other forms of spirituality are deemed demonic and inferior. Maria forces colonial religion on Krotoa. She asks Krotoa why she wants to go to any religious ceremony amongst her people since she already prays to Jesus Christ.

5.6.8 Saviour and Adam-like Character

Further, in the same scene, Van Riebeeck returns from his journey to the island and learns that Maria has imprisoned Krotoa for three weeks already. He is furious with Maria and he accuses her of being inhumane. He immediately swoops in to go and save Krotoa from the inhumanness of his wife Maria. Here a portrayal of Van Riebeeck's humanity and his soft spot for Krotoa is conveyed in contrast to his wife's inhumane treatment of Krotoa. He then fully embodies the Adam-like character because he is blameless; it was his wife who did not treat Krotoa well. Later in the film, we also observe that he is blameless for how Krotoa's life turned out because it was Wagenaer who made her life unbearable, not him.

When the scene shifts, we see this Adam-like character rape Krotoa. He gives in to his 'urges,' to his desire for her. This is interesting because after he played saviour, he sexually abused her. This Adam-like character dominates the body of Krotoa because it was God-given. The act of sexual dominance over the body of the colonised woman

should be recognised within this scene. The Orient, Krotoa, thus is posited as the locus of eroticism by a puritanical society, hemmed by a moralistic code (Shohat, 1991:70).

The saviour and Adam-like portrayal of Van Riebeeck is again signified when Krotoa returns after initially leaving the fort. Her return is a surprise to him. In this scene once again, we are supplied with the Adam-like and human portrayal of Van Riebeeck. His humanity is characterised by deep remorse and tears for what he has done to her. Further in the scene, there is again a contrast between him and Maria Van Riebeeck when they learn that Krotoa is pregnant. She immediately accuses Krotoa of sleeping with many men in the tribe and the reason she had returned was that she was ashamed. When Maria suggests that Krotoa may not be truthful about the location of the conception of the baby, which she says took place at the fort, he immediately comes to Krotoa's defence saying he does not believe she would lie about something like that. 'Eva has a Dutch heart' is his response.

5.6.9 Krotoa, the Rape Victim

Krotoa's portrayal of womanhood takes full shape after she has been sexually violated by Van Riebeeck and she returns home. She is traumatised as she makes her way home. The scene portrays Krotoa as a vulnerable victim of rape. Abrahams has observed the effects of rape on rape-victims, and the portrayal of rape is clear here in this scene. Krotoa goes through the phase of self-hatred and self-blame for the sexual violence committed against her. She hides the truth from her uncle Autshumato as she tries to get away from the memory of sexual violence and violation. She says that she is cursed and not worthy.

5.6.10 Colonial Ideology

Regarding the effects of the sexual abuse noted above, Krotoa was not the same after her experience of sexual abuse. Thus, my argument is that colonial ideology is present once she has internalised her unworthiness—this is one of the effects of her sexual abuse. The film presents the scene right after Krotoa returned home to her people ready to get married to Doman. Her uncles ask her to go back to the fort to serve as their spy. The shocking response by Krotoa even after she had been sexually violated reeks of how colonial ideology filtered in among the colonised people. Krotoa agrees with her uncle to go back to the fort (to the very location which marks her ontological violation). She responds that she believes that there is a middle way for both cultures

to co-exist. She portrays a colonial victory in which the colonised becomes enraptured in colonial ideology. This is a very potent colonial strategy, and a practical example of what Abrahams says is prevalent in rape victims. Krotoa tries to see the humanity in the perpetrator and this makes the sexual violation bearable.

This scene presents Krotoa as an agent of the colonial powers; she speaks the mind of the colonisers. This colonial mindset is the ultimate goal of the colonisers. They have developed and civilised the minds of the subaltern Krotoa. Here she is seen as an oppressed woman taking on a role that would lead to the oppression of her people. Another instance of this colonial ideology and mindset is found in the scene where Van Riebeeck entertains the representatives of the 'VOC' formally known as Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, a firm establishment (council of Dutchmen) securing the state's trade in the Indian Ocean which assisted in the Dutch war of independence from Spain. There, Krotoa is a special guest at the meeting to seal the deal with the representatives. The instruction of the commander is that she should convince the VOC with her remarkable negotiation skills that further trading is possible. She, therefore, says, "*I have been at the fort from the age of eleven. I have learned the language of the Dutch and assimilated their culture, as will others. It is possible and that is what the future may hold*." The character Krotoa expresses the willingness for the under-developed yet fertile land, which is open for taking, to be colonised.

Again, Krotoa later interacts with Doman the following day after entertaining the VOC. Doman has been imprisoned for stealing back cattle, and Eykamma one of the front fighters of the Khoi tribe, he had also have been killed. Krotoa is portrayed as the colonised acolyte as she tells Doman that Autshumato should have kept to the arrangement and that it was foolish to steal again. For Doman, the cattle are nothing compared to the land that the Dutch are busy stealing from the Khoi. Her response to him is, "*Why are you so blind to what the Dutch can offer us, they won't harm us if we share the land with them. The land does not belong to us, but we belong to the land. Why can our people not see this*?" Such a statement is what McKinlay (2004:42) refers to as the colonised speaking straight out of the mouth of the coloniser. In this scene, she is very much portrayed as the victim of the coloniser. Her mind is captured by colonising ideology.

5.6.11 Krotoa as Orient

Krotoa is portrayed as Orient in her interactions with Pieter Van Meerhoff. He is the discoverer who loves to travel, explore, and discover, but he is also a medical practitioner. In the scene where Krotoa is rejected by her people as well as by the Dutch, he is instructed to accompany Krotoa to her sister. On Krotoa's traumatic journey to her sister, he admires her knowledge of Dutch, and knowledge of her Khoi heritage. She becomes a mystery to him. Krotoa becomes nauseous and picks some sour figs from the bush which aid her nausea. He is so charmed by this that he asks her, "You sound Dutch, you wear Dutch clothes, but you eat sour figs and know about the Khoi Bush? Promise, that you will teach me all about the healing plants." As a European doctor, he experienced the healing wonders of African herbs, the natural healing knowledge of the indigenous. This is a portrayal of the exoticism to be experienced through other cultures specifically those of the Dark Continent.

Krotoa represents the unknown to Van Meerhoff about the exotic, explorable culture. She is a mystery of the land and of what it has to offer. She is the veiled woman that needs unveiling in order to be understood. Krotoa is also the subaltern woman in need of rescuing from her environment and state of mind. Here, the colonial gaze is in motion.

5.6.12 Krotoa as Translator

Krotoa throughout the film is presented as a remarkable and intelligent indigenous gem. Her translation and negotiation skills are of great benefit to the Dutch, and according to her character portrayal, she believes this is to the benefit of her people. This character portrayal is indeed a transformative portrayal. She is presented as a woman with agency, and her resourcefulness and hue of assertiveness come across well (Wells, 1998:418). She is the only woman present in negotiation meetings. The scene where her agency appears most is when Krotoa returns after being sent away to her sister. Since she lost the baby, she is able to return and resume her position as the Commander's translator and negotiator. The scene is dramatically conveyed of when she returns to the fort with Van Meerhoff. Van Riebeeck and his officials are on their way to war against the Khoi who keeps on stealing back their cattle and two of his soldiers died in the process. Krotoa dramatically intervenes and convinces Van Riebeeck to have her accompany them to speak first to her people to find a middle

ground for all to co-exist. Van Riebeeck ironically asks her why she still wants to protect her people after they abandoned her. Nonetheless, she accompanies the Dutch on their quest to resolve the conflict (with violence or with negotiation) depending on the Khoi's response. Krotoa goes along to negotiate peace between the two groups. Emelia Steenekamp who has analysed the film *Krotoa* as a perpetuation of Afrikaner nationalism in her Master's dissertation titled, "Textures and Entanglements of Contemporary Afrikaner Cinema," notes that the film re-enacts the painting by Davidson Bel, "Van Riebeeck's landing at the Cape Good Hope" (Steenekamp, 2018:54). The painting exposes a clear power relation and dynamics at work as does the film's re-enactment. The Khoi people sitting on the ground on one side informs a portrayal of submissiveness and intimidation, as the Dutch stand upright and dominantly with their flags and weapons, assuming the position of superiority on the opposite side. Their body language points to their dominance and imperial attitude.

I do confirm also that in Bel's painting, the negotiation scene in the film seems to be a replica of the painting. In the scene in the film, however, Krotoa is an additional figure, and quite significantly, she is at the centre of the scene. Her agency and influence are transparent in this portrayal of her as translator and negotiator. The Khoi people are seated on the ground except for Autshumato who clearly with his body language refuses to be intimidated. On the opposite side, are found the Dutch commander and his entourage except for Pieter Van Meerhoff, who is already seated, and once again is projected as the keen explorer in pursuit of cultural exploration). The Dutch stand upright conveying intimidating body language with their flag and weapons in clear sight. As the negotiations begin, Krotoa, who appears to be in control of the situation, decides to sit down and makes a gesture that Van Riebeeck and Autshumato too should be seated. This is a clear indication that Krotoa is in the middle of the two tribes. She truly believes that co-existence is indeed possible. This is a common colonial strategy and progression and can be observed as the colonial gaze swings into action to capture the colonised subaltern being used by the colonisers to their benefit. Shohat helps one to understand this portrayal as the naïve colonised woman operating as a vehicle for the colonising patriarchal powers. Krotoa is a metaphor for what the land signifies.

Also interesting in this scene is Autshumato who clearly expresses anger at Van Riebeeck because Krotoa has been violated and battered under Van Riebeeck's care.

Unknown to him, however, is that it was Van Riebeeck who violated her. Krotoa here plays a calculated role since she does not reveal the truth of what happened between her and Van Riebeeck during the negotiation which she brokers. Rather, she dies with this secret, as she chooses to protect him. This depiction of Krotoa in this scene also supports Abrahams' (1995: 17) observation that rape victims suffer silently. The complexities that mark the relationship between Krotoa and Van Riebeeck come to the fore. Many rape victims are prone to do as they are told when the perpetrator is someone close to them. They protect the perpetrator because they see the humanity in that perpetrator.

5.6.13 The Love Story

In the film, there is a suggested portrayal of Krotoa's ironic romantic connection and attraction to Van Riebeeck. Much of the rape scene is portrayed as him acting on the impulses of romantic attraction towards her. This portrayal is transparent right through the film as multiple scenes place emphasis on the way he looks at her with admiration and enchantment. The 'connection' is portrayed as reciprocal. The presence of a love story in the film is noted by prominent historians like Patric Tariq Mellett, a descendant of Krotoa and prominent book author, playwright, and filmmaker, Sylvia Vollenhoven. In a News24 article, "Does *Krotoa* Whitewash Khoi History?" (2017), Vollenhoven describes her reception of the movie as an uncanny and tasteless love affair between Krotoa and the benevolent commander of the colonial administration, Jan van Riebeeck.

This portrayal of the romantic attraction between Krotoa and Van Riebeeck is also contrasted or played against her romantic interest in Van Meerhoff. The play between the two love interests of Krotoa is signified in an overdramatic scene in which Krotoa once again is portrayed as a damsel in distress when on a journey with Van Riebeeck and Van Meerhoff. They travel on horses, each on a separate horse. Krotoa's horse then runs off with her and her life is in danger. The two men then immediately react by trying to be her saviour, and a glimpse of competition is entertained between the two men. Van Meerhoff manages to save her and leans in to kiss her, but as soon as Van Riebeeck arrives and embodies the saviour-like character, he reaches for his sword screaming and demanding that Van Meerhoff release Krotoa. Van Meerhoff then replies, "Mineer, you don't have to save her." Krotoa interjects with the words, "He did nothing I did not allow."

This is a childish display of the social construction, a competition/fight between two men about 'who gets the girl,' in which the woman is objectified. This construction and patriarchal tendencies of the Dutch continue when the three of them return from the inland after negotiations with the Oedesoa, the husband of Krotoa's sister. Van Meerhoff asks permission from the commander to pursue a romantic relationship with Krotoa, saying that the feelings he has for Krotoa he had never felt for any woman. Van Riebeeck responds very possessively that, as Krotoa's employer and guardian, he cannot allow Van Meerhoff's flirtation to undermine their work relationship. He also has plans for her, 'as a translator.' The cheesy love affair Vollenhoven refers to can be observed in Krotoa's confrontation with Van Riebeeck after his conversation with Van Meerhoff. She tells him that he should admit that his refusal is not about his concern for her, but about his desire for her. She does not say that she is not interested in him. Rather, she says, "we both know it cannot happen, you must allow me a chance on love *(sic)* after everything that happened." This implies that they cannot be together due to circumstances.

In this overdramatic scene, the presence of a colonising strategy should be noted. The colonised woman is a motif of a tragic romance, a visual articulation of a colonising strategy. As Dube argues, "in the end, the colonised women are often won over by the colonizer with romance, but in the end, it is not a relationship of equals then the colonized woman is left crying over the travelling heroes" (Dube, 2000:19). This act of crying over the travelling heroes is seen in the scene where Van Riebeeck prepares to return to Batavia so that he is replaced by the new Commander. Krotoa is heartbroken because of his departure saying that she had forgiven him; he has changed her whole life. Her tone conveys that he changed her life for the better. Once again, this is a portrayal of the colonised mindset manifesting in the colonised woman.

5.6.14 Humanity of Jan Van Riebeeck

Throughout the film, there is a transparent and prominent foregrounding of the humanity of Van Riebeeck. His dealing with Herry specifically is not hostile. He is understanding and open to the views of others. He is presented as a man under the pressure of the Dutch Company to be harsh and firm with the indigenous people, but he does not want to. All of his hostile dealings are under the instruction of the Dutch Company. He is portrayed as a man who is not at all embedded in white settler ideology.

There is an extreme portrayal of the Adam-like character in Van Riebeeck. He is blameless and nothing is his fault or intention. He is contrasted against other scapegoats like his wife on whom colonial strategies and ways of dealing are projected. His wife is the one who is racist, classist and patriarchal. She is depicted as an agent of patriarchy throughout the film. Additionally, she is jealousy of Krotoa, because of the attention she receives from all the men and especially because of the soft spot her husband has for Krotoa. His right-hand man, Official Roelof De Man, is also presented as a scapegoat, the one with the colonial ideology and approach. His apparent misogynistic attitude towards Krotoa is overly exemplified. He refuses to comprehend Van Riebeeck's' respect and admiration for Krotoa. He is extremely racist and constantly wants to employ violence in his dealings with the Khoi. He is the ideal colonialist, and Van Riebeeck is portrayed as his exact opposite.

Thus, various scenes present Van Riebeeck as human, compassionate and understanding, a man who actually does not want to colonise but co-exist with the Khoi. He is presented as tolerant of racial diversity, respecting the Khoi culture. He is slow to anger and slow to react to the attacks from the Khoi. He cuts the picture of a vulnerable man, a man with good intentions, and largely, this is the man Krotoa sees in him. The most prominent portrayal of his humanity is presented in his interactions with Krotoa. When he is deployed back to Batavia, Krotoa is very upset, and in that scene, another intimate portrayal of his humanity is conveyed. A frantic Krotoa tells him nothing will be the same without him. They have accomplished so much together. She tells him that he has changed her life and she forgives him for what he had done to her. As a result, he becomes extremely emotional. He is in tears and an intimate embrace is shared between them until his wife walks in and finds them both in tears.

Further, the dominant portrayal of Van Riebeeck as the saviour of Krotoa is exemplified in the climactic scenes where Krotoa's life is unravelled. Krotoa's wellbeing was tied to Van Riebeeck's presence in her life. It seems his paternal influence was what gave her life meaning and structure. He is portrayed as her benefactor and protector. His approaching departure brings nothing but misery to her life. This saviour-like portrayal of Van Riebeeck is foregrounded throughout the film, and true to his Adam-like portrayal, Van Riebeeck is once again contrasted with a figure that can operate as a scapegoat liberating him from any form of the blame for how Krotoa's life turned out. With his departure, the figure of the new commander

Zachary Wagenaer is also contrasted with him. Commander Wagenaer embodies the full Afrikaner settlement ideology, which Van Riebeeck lacks. Wagenaer despises Krotoa and Van Meerhoff and banishes them to Robben Island. He does not value Krotoa's input and her contributions to the success of the Dutch settlement in the Cape Good Hope. At this point, Krotoa starts to drink, which results in her uncontrollable drinking problem, for her life then had no more meaning.

It is only in Van Riebeeck's absence that Krotoa is portrayed as remorseful about her contribution to the Dutch settlement in the Cape Good Hope. It now dawns on her that her negotiations did not help her people. Her final attempt to impress the Commander was to agree to marry Van Meerhoff, yet this did not work, as he sends them off to Robben Island where her life further spirals out of control. Her husband also dies, and she takes refuge in alcohol. Her final dialogue occurs when she openly admits her contribution to the colonisation of the land of her people by the Dutch.

5.6.15 Turnaround Portrayal

A turnaround portrayal of Krotoa that is observed in a decolonising analysis is her taking agency by refusing to wear what she is told to wear and appearing at the dinner with VOC officials in her skin clothes. Proclaiming that her name is Krotoa, not Eva and that she is a princess of the Goringhiacona tribe, she says, "*If I have one regret it is that I have realized too late that I helped you rape my country. You came here with your horses and weapons and we still welcomed you. You bribed us with cheap trinkets and empty promises. I believed we could live in peace together. You call us barbarians; you are the barbarians with weapons*."

The portrayals of Krotoa throughout the film are diverse and dense, which bring me to the conclusion that she has been portrayed as a paradigm for colonial ideology and specifically a paradigm for the rainbow nation. Beyond the critique of the film, according to Sylvia Vollenhoven, there should be an acknowledgement that the film captures Krotoa as a woman drained of her usefulness by the colonial powers and discarded when she no longer served their purpose.

5.7 Contemporary Interpretations of *Krotoa* (2017)

In a postcolonial country still trying to piece together the devastating effects of colonialism, the film *Krotoa* (2017) has indeed evoked various mixed reactions. This

film is inspired by historical facts; therefore, it influences many perceptions of colonial history. These responses are diverse based mostly on the perspectives of the specific audience. There are many claims that the film transformed perspectives of South African history, in particular, colonialism. Some perceive that the film *Krotoa* informs the picture of Krotoa as an overlooked figure in South African history. Others believe that the film was a 'whitewashed' in the attempt to relate the diverse history of South Africa.

One of the scriptwriters of the film, Kaye Ann Williams in a *News24* article (2017), responds to the critique the film has received. She claims that her aim is to encourage fruitful discussions and dialogues and to accentuate Krotoa as the remarkable woman she was, a woman ingrained in the South African history who has gone unnoticed for many years.

There have been various critiques of the depiction of the Khoi culture, but the Khoi have not received sufficient attention in the film. A few glimpses of them singing and dancing do not portray the richness of their culture. The deeper political complexities have not been integrated into the film; only the Dutch colony's passiveness is foregrounded in the film, specifically in the period of Van Riebeeck as commander. Patric Mellet's response to the film Krotoa is captured in the *News24* article (2017) as follows:

> The movie projects Krotoa as being solely shaped by Van Riebeeck's. It was not about Krotoa. The third and most devastating decade of her life is a sanitization of the cruelty she was put through by the Europeans and the torment she underwent. Avoided too is the dominant paradigm in all three decades, of being a child, teen and woman of great substance and independence. This team could not write a high-status Krotoa because they remained trapped in their own 21st-century bigotry. For the same reason, all the Khoi characters, even the chiefs such as Autshumao and Nommoa or Douman, whose true stories are fascinating, are little more than blundering cardboard cut-outs. The message: The best we can aim for here is a noble savage (Mellet, 2017).

Further, on the portrayal of Van Riebeeck as saviour, it is argued that the film *Krotoa* perpetuates colonial ideologies as manifested in Afrikaner settlement history. This narrative account of the life trajectory of Krotoa conforms to and furthers Afrikaner ideology. It enables interpretations that the systems of oppression go both ways, the oppressed having a hand in their oppression rather than placing emphasis on the hegemonic nature of colonialism. Steenekamp captures this point as follows:

> The film subscribes to, and perpetuates, a signifying economy that simply does not allow for rupture. In other words, the filmic language of Krotoa does not comprise a

> lexicon that includes the terms and concepts necessary for a counter-hegemonic expression. The language is phallocratically privileging of whiteness, and paternalist (Steenekamp, 2018:50).

I believe that the figure of Van Riebeeck has been centred to redeem his heroism in the Afrikaner ideology, portraying him as a victim of power structures. His redemption has enjoyed more exploration than the deeper power and political complexities and climate between the Dutch and the Khoi people in the seventeenth century.

The heroic iconography of Van Riebeeck we encounter in the film perpetuates the values of white Afrikaner populism. This is ironic because the purpose of the film is to transform and restore the image of Krotoa who has been ignored in the course of history. However, the iconography of figures like Van Riebeeck and the deficient exploration of the Khoi culture coincide in the revisionist history, which perpetuates colonial ideologies.

Not only is this Afrikaner populism perpetuated through the iconography of Van Riebeeck but also in terms of language. I agree with Steenekamp's observation and reception of the film *Krotoa* (2017), as she maintains that the "usage of the white middle-class variant of the Afrikaans language, Krotoa enacts firm maintenance of the Afrikaner sensory fabric" (Steenekamp, 2018:57). It perpetuates Afrikaner settlement because it foregrounds Afrikaans as the dominant language. Somehow, the so-called Dutch referred to in the film is communicated in Afrikaans. The actors assume the Khoi characters in the film had to learn the Khoi language, yet the actors assume the Dutch characters did not have to learn Dutch. Thus, the Khoi language is othered in this process and Afrikaans veiled as the indigenous language.

5.8 Krotoa through Rahab's Reading Prism

The overall goal of this study has been to subvert the imperial and patriarchal strategies used to depict the character of Krotoa, decolonising and re-reading for liberative accounts of women who have been written 'down' in history by the coloniser's pen. Dube (2000) argues that the core principle of Rahab's reading prism is to re-read death-provoking text for liberation. This study has attempted to transgress the portrayals of Krotoa and of Rahab to present liberating interpretations of these remarkable women who have suffered under the yoke of imperialism.

Rahab's reading prism has been delineated in chapter 2 of this study. The prism has been applied in a practical way in the preceding headings of this current chapter. By means of a Rahab reading prism, one could more easily recognize the various imperial strategies used in the portrayal of Krotoa in the film *Krotoa (2017)* that have been discussed at length. This following section briefly summarises the overall praxis of Rahab's reading prism applied in the above section of this study.

Rahab's reading prism firstly prioritises exposing the various layers of imperial and patriarchal oppression. It highlights the historical facts of colonisation and works towards a decolonising community that is grounded in liberating practises (Dube, 2000:122). In addition, Rahab's reading prism acknowledges that women from developing countries in many cases have to negotiate first things first principle, a principle of prioritising colonial oppression over patriarchal oppression. In the case of Krotoa, this study has engaged in the analysis of the multiple layers of oppression that she endured. First, we analysed the imperial oppression which is dominantly meted out to her by the Dutch as well as the patriarchal oppression that she experienced not only from her own people but also from the Dutch.

Secondly, Rahab's reading prism emphasises the resurrection power that the colonised possesses when resisting imperial annihilation. Dube (2000:122) writes that "The decolonizing Rahab, therefore, knows and recognises the pen that constructed her and intertextually subverts it." In order to resist the historical portrayals of Krotoa, this study has applied Rahab's reading prism to read the character of Krotoa, that is, it has applied Rahab's reading prism intertextually. Retelling the story of Krotoa through an alternative lens, we show that she was the construction of the coloniser's pen and that her dealings with the Dutch resulted in a form of post-traumatic stress disorder, as she has suffered sexual violence and rejection. Krotoa took solace in alcohol which became a coping mechanism for the layers of abuse she had endured throughout her lifetime. Her premature death was occasioned by her social context. In this reinterpretation, therefore, there was an attempt to subvert and decolonise the master's narrative in the portrayal of Krotoa.

Exposing the colonising strategies present in the film *Krotoa* (2017), for instance, how the film has focused on strengthening Afrikaner ideologies and the iconography of Jan Van Riebeeck, this study in line with Rahab's reading prism (Dube, 2000:123) has

refused to prioritise precolonial imperial and patriarchal cultural oppression and the political superiority of the Dutch.

Lastly, Rahab's reading prism, as Dube argues, is a specific postcolonial reading optic with "a feminist eye of many angles, seeing reading and hearing literary texts through resisting imperial and patriarchal oppressive structures and ideologies" (Dube, 2000:123). This study has prioritised Dube's approach and reading optic. In postcolonial feminist intent, it has transgressed and rejected the imperial portrayal of Krotoa and a colonial canon that still privileges colonial thinking, ensuring that it infiltrates into contemporary society.

5.9 Conclusion of Chapter

This chapter has attempted to analyse the various interpretations and portrayals of Krotoa's life trajectory. It offered an exploration of the historical accounts of Krotoa in historiography, emphasising how she has been written 'down' in history. Krotoa as many other women like the biblical character Rahab has suffered under the coloniser's pen. A delineation of the portrayals of Krotoa is presented, for example, as Eva of the Dutch, *etcetera*. Thirdly, there has been an attempt to present the portrayal and perception of Krotoa's religiosity. The aim is to deconstruct the religious portrayals of Krotoa, observing Krotoa's religiosity, not on the terms of the Dutch and their construction of religion or the Reformed God but based on various experiences of the Deity in her tribe.

Furthermore, there was an attempt to envision a different portrait of Krotoa, considering alternative reasons for Krotoa's behaviour. I have analysed Krotoa as a rape victim trying to navigate the power complexities of her time. As such, it is assumed that there is more to the story than what the colonisers have inscribed in their diaries, than the coloniser's construction of Krotoa. The various stages of Krotoa's life have been examined in order to arrive at a different depiction of Krotoa. She presents behavioural patterns of rape victims and this reality should be considered in analysing her life.

This last section of this chapter has focused amply on the portrayals of Krotoa in the 2017 film *Krotoa*. A postcolonial approach has been employed to analyse the various colonial strategies that take place in cinematography, and the character portrayal of

Krotoa. Krotoa's portrayal in the film presents multiple colonial strategies, and the purpose of reconstructing Krotoa in history may not be foregrounded in the film that narrates the events of her life. Rather, Jan van Riebeeck's humanity and tolerant iconography, thus, redeem the historical perspective of Van Riebeeck as the heroic father of the nation, which is foregrounded throughout the film. One can conclude that this film does not only perpetuate colonising constructions of Krotoa but also, as Emelia Steenekamp suggests, perpetuates Afrikaner nationalism (Steenekamp, 2018). Krotoa is presented as an agent of colonialism, a paradigm of the rainbow nation, as it is conceptualised today.

In the final chapter, this study will continue to delineate the character of Krotoa through a Rahab's reading prism. In this chapter, we will ask whether it is possible to find an alternative, liberating, life-giving portrayal of Krotoa, in order to transgress the colonising and imperial strategies identified in Chapter 5 of this study.

CHAPTER 6

6. RAHAB AND KROTOA: A POSTCOLONIAL ENCOUNTER

Rahab and Krotoa, at first glance, appear to be worlds apart, isolated characters in their own distinctive worlds, and experiencing different sets of complexities within their own distinct contexts. However, based on a deeper review, a connection between the biblical character Rahab and the African historical figure Krotoa emerges (in this case, the cinematic portrayal of Krotoa). The question, then, would be, what do these two women have in common? Both women hold the destiny of their native lands in the face of a colonial threat. Their narratives represent impressionistic accounts that predict how the imperial oppression of their native country will unfold. The Rahab reading prism as discussed in the previous chapters, affords us the tools to reread Krotoa as portrayed in the film and in some historical understandings of her.

6.1 Different Yet the Same

The biblical narrative of Rahab in Joshua 2 and 6 and the portrayal of Krotoa in the film *Krotoa* (2017) correspond with the typical portrayals of female characters in narratives and plots of conquest. Building on the postcolonial feminist study by Rowlett (2000:67), which examines the similarities between Rahab and Pocahontas as narratives of conquest, this section of the study aims to engage in a similar analysis by way of an analogy between Rahab and Krotoa. As discussed in previous chapters, both women are portrayed as the good natives who almost instantly accept and submit to the inherent superiority of the colonisers as well as their colonising culture. She surrenders without hesitation her identity, religious beliefs, and her native compatriots. In an act of “sanctified imagination,” I imagine these two women to have a metaphorical postcolonial encounter wherein their worlds collide. Wilda Gafney (2017:3) introduced me to the creative and transgressive term “sanctified imagination”, a term taken from black preaching. She builds on the work of previous scholars who suggested that sanctified imagination is a form of what biblical scholars call reader-response criticism.

In the process of “sanctified imagination,” Gafney conveys to us is one of the golden frameworks which womanists uses. In the pursuit to bring these characters voices to life, to reimagine the patriarchal umbrella they have been forced under, to question and imagine that there must be more to these stories. Thus, indeed there is a sanctified imaginative postcolonial encounter between these two women as they have suffered under the yoke of imperialistic and patriarchal power of the pen.

6.1.1 The Good Native

In the two narratives under analysis, both Rahab and Krotoa are portrayed as the “good native”. Since Rowlett (2000:67) has already compared the portrayals of both Rahab and Pocahontas as good natives, I will add Krotoa to this analysis. Krotoa, like Rahab and Pocahontas, is portrayed also as the “good native” who eagerly protects the colonisers from her own people and later, she was welcomed into the colonial community as one of their own. Interestingly, all three women reportedly married into the colonial community. They are remembered by the colonialists for their heroism, as they played vital roles in the survival of the people who invaded their lands. Rahab protects the spies from her own people (the kings’ men). She then saves the entire Israelite community, marries an Israelite, and by so doing, becomes an ancestor of both David and Jesus. She is celebrated for her faith, which has flowed over into her heroic actions. Pocahontas protects John Smith (the Europeans) from her people (the Native Americans), causing her people to lose their land as in the case of Rahab. She later marries one of the English men (not John Smith). She is celebrated for being a woman with a strong conviction who stands for love and not war.

Krotoa protects the Dutch when her people (the Khoi) were ready to go to war. She pleads for co-existence between both peoples but ultimately, her people lose their land in the process. She later marries into the Dutch community. She is celebrated for being the mother of the rainbow nation, one who advocates peace and co-existence between different cultures, a figure of the South African dream. Like Pocahontas, the film *Krotoa* (2017) also emphasises the cheesy love story between Krotoa (the colonised) and Van Riebeeck (the coloniser). As such, Pocahontas’ and Krotoa’s romantic interests are reciprocated even though both women are presented as lovesick, stereotypical females.

Of this portrayal, Rowlett writes:

> Narratives of colonization, whether they are folk tales, official accounts or literary representations, often evince a gender polarity in which conquering of the culture (the one composing the story) gives itself characteristics which are considered to be masculine and the other feminised (Rowlett, 2000:66).

Rowlett's description above fits the stories of Rahab and Krotoa, both of which demonstrate the gender dichotomy between the masculinity of the coloniser and the femininity of the colonised, portraying the weak and the strong parties. In the presented cases, the colonised other, the women, represent a feminised trait of seeking peace and love above all, specifically in the cases of Pocahontas and Krotoa, as they fight and sacrifice themselves for the lives of the natives.

6.1.2 Savage and Superb Native

In the conquest narratives, the land which is to be colonised is always presented as uncivilised and in need of rescue from the coloniser (Dube, 2000:85). This uncivilization and need to rescue are always symbolised by the woman at the contact zone. The woman is the embodiment of the "forces of nature which must be brought under the civilizing control of men" (Rowlett, 2000:67). Rahab, Pocahontas and Krotoa are the embodiment of the savage state of their native land.

Krotoa and Rahab are presented or used as a metaphor for the savagery of their native land. Rahab the prostitute is savage because of her sexual immorality, and this alludes to the whole Canaan community. Krotoa, in her 'skin clothes' and savage ludicrous ways of worshipping the moon and the stars, is portrayed as savage, in need of civilisation from the colonisers. On the other hand, these women also are portrayed and celebrated as superb figures when they become the mouthpiece of the coloniser. Rahab, when she recites the Hebrews' Deuteronomy texts, is celebrated by the Israelites. For this recital of the coloniser's creed and submission to the superiority of the coloniser, for her acts of faith, she is celebrated as a superb foreigner. Similarly, Krotoa is seen as a superb native when she learns the foreign language and the culture of the Dutch. She is celebrated for having a Dutch heart, a superb being who easily adapts to the civilised way of being.

Rahab, Krotoa and Pocahontas are celebrated for their audacity to stand up to their own people in order to protect the colonisers. These women were savage and superb at the same time. Dube (2000:93) captures this analogy of being savage and superb

in her analysis of an ancient imperial narrative, ‘Heart of Darkness.’ In this narrative, the travelling coloniser Mr Kurtz who comes to view the African land meets an African woman at the contact zone who intrigues him. He charms her and as she falls in love with him. He ups and leaves again because he is a traveller. The narrative captures how the woman, who does not have a name and is only called the savage and superb woman, frantically cries after Mr Kurtz. She loses all control when she learns Mr Kurtz has died, as she shouts and raises her hands, signifying her wildness and extravagance she displays deep passions to the author. Her emotional state and uncontrolled behaviour the narrator compares to the state of the land, savage. The use of the figure of a woman as a symbol of the colonised land suggests that the colonised are wild and harmless. It suggests that the colonised yearn and ask for subjugation and they should indeed be subjugated to save them from their passion and wildness (Dube, 2000:95).

Comparing the characters of Rahab and Krotoa to the colonised woman in the narrative of ‘Heart of Darkness,’ one would see that both Rahab and Krotoa are not too different from this other woman. All three women are objects used by the coloniser's pen to compose their imperial desires and project them on the bodies of their victims, who according to them (the authors) ask to be colonised and subjugated. The passion, the audacity, of these women is seen as savage, yet this savagery is used to the benefit of the coloniser as the women are transformed into superb beings speaking out of imperialised mouths.

6.1.3 Rahab and Krotoa as Negotiators

In the biblical account of Rahab, Joshua 2:9-14 relates the impeccable negotiation skills of Rahab. She negotiates herself out of death, for the lives of the spies and her family’s lives. This art of negotiation is at the core of the colonisation process. Likewise, Krotoa was a negotiator between her people and the Dutch. As the Dutch set out to colonise the African territory, Krotoa became their translator, and in the heat of the conflict between the two tribes, Krotoa negotiated for a middle ground for both parties to co-exist in the land.

In the cases of both Rahab and Krotoa, their negotiation skills were used to the detriment of their people and the benefit of the coloniser. Both women were also drained of their usefulness. In the account of Krotoa, we see that she was used as the

mouthpiece of the governor, and as soon as the Dutch had the upper hand, Krotoa was discarded because she was of no use to the Dutch anymore. Rather, she became an embarrassment.

In the negotiation acts of these two women, a certain sense of agency is portrayed as alluded to in the Rahab chapter. The portrayal of agency too is a literary construction by which the author uses these women as scapegoats, who willingly participate in the eradication of their own people. Rowlett (1996:13) considers this a form of systemic violence against Rahab, as is the case of Krotoa. Placed at the centre of the evil of imperialism, these women, as negotiators, are presented as direct accomplices. This indeed is a rhetoric of violence employed against their characters; their vulnerability was exploited as noted earlier. Rahab, being an outcast of her people, lives on the periphery of the city; and, Krotoa is rejected by her own people after being sexually violated. These women were made to feel a part of a collective community; therefore, the colonisers won their loyalty in a time of vulnerability (Rowlett, 1996:17). This, according to Rowlett (1996), is an embedded imperialistic strategy employed by the coloniser. Their agency was a conceptual metaphor. What kind of agency can anyone enjoy or employ when it is to the detriment of your people? Rahab and Krotoa's agency, in the power dynamics of their distinctive contexts, was a make-believe agency.

6.2 Krotoa—a Queer Figure?

In the previous chapter, we have recognised Rahab as a queer figure. Identifying Rahab as a queer figure deconstructs the hegemonic and imperial interpretations of her character. The analysis of Krotoa as a queer woman will be analysed further here. A queer interpretation undermines hetero-patriarchal interpretations of what is considered normative. A queer interpretation that challenges definitions that shape sexuality and gender discourses, and critically analyses various interpretations helps us into a praxis of what Dube (2000) posits as the fourth principle of Rahab's reading prism. It is reading biblical texts against imperialising narrative strategies, aiming to revolutionise the structural oppression, and cultivating readings and writings of liberative interdependence where differences of equality and justice for various cultures, religions, genders, classes, sexualities, ethnicities, and races can be re-evaluated and reconstructed. A queer reading of Krotoa and Rahab is indeed a

postcolonial feminist liberating reading strategy. This section attempts to explore further the queerness of Krotoa.

In line with Althaus-Reid's (2007:128) analysis of Rahab, I would argue that Krotoa is a queer character that challenges the Dutch understanding of ethnicity and sexual identity. In the 2017 film, Krotoa does not conform to the binaries of the Dutch or the binaries of the Khoi culture. Rather, she explores both cultures on her own terms.

To the Dutch, Krotoa is a chaotic person, who is savage, sexually immoral, and untrustworthy. She is a native, yet very clever, a trait that was strange to the Dutch understanding of the people of the Dark Continent. According to the Dutch, the Khoi are uncivilised and not as clever as the Dutch. Krotoa baffles the minds of the Dutch, as she is not confined to the Dutch and their ways. She explores their culture, but she is also deeply rooted in her own culture. In a queer reading based on Althaus-Reid's (2007) observation of queer figures, I can see that Krotoa's body has been racialized and that hetero-patriarchal constructions have been imposed on her body. The Dutch needed to define this savage woman. To them, she was uncivilised and savage yet at the same time intriguing, representing the mystery the land had to offer.

Reading Krotoa in light of Althaus-Reid's (2007:134) reading of Rahab, who she considers a non-normative figure that could be defined in the binary terms of the coloniser, I would argue that Krotoa, as a Rahab, has resisted the coloniser's binaries of a monotheistic culture and religion. As discussed in chapter 5 of this study, Krotoa's religiosity could not be understood by the Dutch. Landman (1998:358) argues that Krotoa may have made sense of the Dutch God by way of an analogy of her own understanding of her native gods, which her people worshipped. A heteronormative understanding of religion was forced on Krotoa. The idea of one God, one nation, and one faith type of mono-loving mentality of religion was not what Krotoa has known all her life; rather, it was introduced to her by the Dutch.

Krotoa's religiosity was defined on her own terms; she adapted to and explored religion in both the Dutch religious ways as well as in the Khoi culture. Krotoa's ability to adapt to both religions is a practical example of Althaus-Reid's (2007:132) notion of a bisexual praxis of thinking about religion. Krotoa did not commit to a mono-loving ideology of religion; rather, she was coerced into being baptised later in her life. She explored the religion of her people who did not apply a monotheistic form of worship

as well as the religious rituals and understandings of the Dutch. Thus, she applied a bisexual praxis approach to religion.

Krotoa indeed can be considered a queer figure to be reckoned with, not conforming, but paving her own way, and breaking the boundaries of what it means to be Dutch and what it means to be African.

6.3 Conclusion

The preceding chapters have drawn on the works of various postcolonial feminist scholars who subscribe to the belief that the Bible has dispensed various forms of imperial and patriarchal oppression. It has been used to justify various atrocities in the world. This study has argued that the Bible should be redacted of life-giving and death provoking influences through its interpretations which flow over into praxis in contemporary society. The Bible influences the lives of the most vulnerable, as such, decolonising and deconstructing hegemonic interpretations of the biblical texts is the only way the Bible can still possess value to the marginalised.

This study has explored and delineated postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible as the chosen methodology and shown the rich roots of the various branches of postcolonial feminist interpretation. The thesis has focused much attention on the distinctive principles of postcolonial feminist interpretation with a specific reference to Rahab's reading prism. It has demonstrated that the chosen methodology is a reading optic and strategy which liberates Rahab and Krotoa from the yoke of imperial and patriarchal interpretations and portrayals. Further, chapter 3 has analysed a nuanced and intertextual postcolonial feminist film theory as an additional methodological approach to analyse critically the imperial strategies employed in the portrayal of Krotoa in the film *Krotoa* (2017). There has been a careful exploration and delineation of postcolonial film theory and its principles, ultimately, connecting it to postcolonial feminist interpretation to assist the analysis of the portrayals of Krotoa. This chapter has taken the view that film, which is influenced by the interpretation of the Bible, constructs, or possesses a specific form of power which could liberate and at the same time perpetuate imperialising interpretations and ideologies.

Chapter 4 of this study has analysed Rahab as portrayed in the biblical accounts of Joshua 2 and 6. Rahab's character and portrayals have been analysed at length through a postcolonial reading optic which analyses Rahab as heroine, traitor, and

victim. The view of this chapter is that Rahab is the victim of the coloniser's pen, a literary construction of Israelite ideology. Ultimately, we conclude that the imperialising portrayals of Rahab were needed to justify the Israelite ideology of the identity of *chosenness*, conquest and Holy War. Considering that Rahab's character has been filtered through various interpretations by the biblical authors and redactors of Joshua, with the Deuteronomistic history in mind, one could argue that Rahab acts as the mouthpiece of the coloniser because she is a literary construction of the biblical author.

Chapter 5 of this study has investigated the historicity of Krotoa's story and showed how Krotoa has been written and accounted for in historical accounts. Krotoa may have been the most written about woman in South African history, yet very little of those accounts have explored the power complexities which played a big role in how Krotoa's life turned out. This chapter has argued that the film *Krotoa* (2017) employed imperial strategies which counter the goal of the film. Instead of revolutionising Krotoa in the history of South Africa or offering a life-giving portrayal of Krotoa, the film has perpetuated elements of Afrikaner nationalism, which redeemed the iconography of Jan Van Riebeeck. Delineating the various portrayals of Krotoa and exposing the patriarchal and imperial ideologies still present in the film, chapter 5 of this study has attempted to apply Rahab's reading prism in a practical way. In the last section of this study there have been a careful analysis of Krotoa through a Rahab reading prism. The Rahab reading prism have indeed provided us with the tools to reread the character portrayal of Krotoa as she, in the film version, has been used as a cinematic literary construction with imperial ideologies.

Rahab and Krotoa have both been celebrated as the mother of nations, Rahab the mother or the ancestor of the Christian religion and Krotoa the mother of the South African rainbow nation. They were both placed on the altar of sacrifice for an inclusive identity and inclusive community. The portrayals of the two women have not considered adequately the complexities of power imperialism and patriarchy that were at the heart of these women's existence. This power dynamic determined the choices they made. Influenced by Dube (2000:76), my conclusion is that these two women suffered under the rhetoric of God, glory, gold, and gender. They are victims of the reproduction of literary-rhetorical imperialising methods so prominent in colonial conquest narratives. The Rahab reading prism has been a helpful reading tool for this study in that it exposes the underlying ideologies and colonial tensions which lead to

Krotoa being perceived as the so-called mother of the rainbow nation and in a different audience as a traitor of her people.

The biblical narrative of Rahab as well as the film *Krotoa* (2017) and Krotoa's historiography have been written 'down' in history. Both are perfect examples of how the imperial powers impose their control on foreign lands and on the bodies of women, who are sacrificed on the altar of unity and imperial control. Thus, I argue firmly that the characters of Rahab and Krotoa were constructed by the patriarchal ideologies of land possession at crucial junctures of colonial attack. Their bodies endured deeply seared wounds of imperialism and patriarchy, and if we do not decolonise these portrayals of their lives, the seared wounds will move from one society to another, appearing on the bodies of the most vulnerable women of our time.

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